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Gorbachov: a fondness for playing European card



It was purely coincidental that the Americans carried out a nuclear test at the same time as Bonn Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher visited Moscow.

The explosion beneath the desert of Nevada was Washington's accompaniment to the prospective superpower talks on a fresh nuclear test ban.

It was a major statement intended to make it clear to Moscow that the United States has no intention of joining the test ban moratorium the Soviet Union has observed for nearly a year.

Yet the Americans are prepared to talk, albeit in a wider framework. The Reagan administration says it is opposed to a test ban because it needs to constantly monitor the performance of its nuclear weapons.

It is also opposed to a test ban because it insists on reliable controls in test areas and frankly admits that tests are indispensable for SDI development.

The argument that verifiability of a test ban is impossible using existing methods has grown threadbare since Moscow has agreed to set up a joint Soviet-American measuring station in Siberia.

As for the need to maintain nuclear warheads, the Soviet Union would be no less at a disadvantage than the United States if essential maintenance were to be neglected.

So the only convincing argument for rejecting a moratorium and a test ban treaty is the American objection that the future *role of the nuclear deterrent* — either disarmament or SDI — must first be clarified.

The first move must be to prevent a fresh turn of the strategic arms build-up screw.

President Reagan has overruled objections from within the US administration and agreed to a meeting of the standing consultative committee that was to monitor the superpowers' track record on Salt 2.

The Russians see this session mainly as an opportunity to pillory the US President for his de facto revocation of Salt 2, which although it may not have been ratified has in effect been observed by both superpowers.

The Americans in contrast plan to raise the violations of Salt 2 they say the Russians have committed.

Moscow's response and behaviour will determine whether Washington declares Salt 2 a dead letter or allows it to live on.

At least a partial Soviet answer has already been forthcoming: Mr Gorbachov's Budapest proposal to reduce by an initial third both superpowers' strategic weapons, thereby reducing stockpiles to the Salt 2 ceilings and rendering the treaty superfluous.

Both rounds of prospective talks are attempts in one way or another to arrive at the "concrete result" without which the Soviet leader is reluctant to visit Washington at the end of the year for the proposed second summit meeting with President Reagan.

Initially promising projects such as a treaty on medium-range missiles in Europe or the destruction of chemical weapons and their manufacturing facilities have turned out to be cliffhangers with their outcome uncertain.

President Reagan may have described the Soviet leader's latest disarmament proposals as a turning point *in talks between Moscow and Washington* but he has yet to put his pen where his mouth is, as it were, refusing to commit himself on paper.

Preparations for the Washington summit are being made with the greatest care by both sides, the summit being billed as the *political* event of the year.

Mr Gorbachov would patently not like to be in a position in which the outcome was likely to be meagre or in which he might have to call the whole summit off.

Both eventualities would strengthen the still powerful ranks of mistrustful observers in Moscow, prompting them to step up their opposition to his approach, which certainly differs from conventional Soviet policy.

The domestic difficulties that Mr *Gorbachov faces have again come to* light in recent weeks in the central committee's refusal to support Gorbachov-style personnel policies at the top.

The Soviet leader has had great difficulty in getting his men appointed to the central committee secretariat and Foreign Ministry, let alone to key foreign postings.

A further pointer has been the way Soviet officialdom has dealt at home with Chernobyl, which has in effect differed from the line mapped out by Mr Gorbachov.



Bonn Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher (left) with Soviet party chief Mikhail Gorbachov in Moscow. Between them is an interpreter. (Photo: AP)

Abroad — in Budapest and Warsaw — the Soviet leader has allowed others to take a closer look at his hand than ever.

Those who had the opportunity will have had little difficulty in finding evidence to support the argument that it left much to be desired — deeds rather than words, for instance.

One point that has grown increasingly clear is Mr Gorbachov's inclination to play the European card.

As the good player he clearly is he isn't showing how highly he rates this *particular trump in the hand he holds.*

In Warsaw he delved into Ancient Greek mythology, comparing the rape of Europa by Zeus disguised as a bull with the United States making off with the independent policies pursued by a number of Western European countries.

Yet he promptly went on to say the Soviet Union had no intention of driving a wedge between the United States and its allies.

This is yet another Soviet turn of phrase, based at present on the hard *core of decline suffered by Communist* Parties in Western Europe, which as a result has few points at which it is liable to political attack.

When Mr Gorbachov refers to Europe or, indeed, to Western Europe he nonetheless seems really to have the United States in mind.

The Europeans may be excluded from the Geneva arms control talks but they are represented at major secondary talks such as the Stockholm *confidence-building and Vienna* troop-cut talks, so they too have a say on issues relating to major topics on the Geneva agenda.

So Mr Gorbachov may stand to gain from canvassing support among America's European allies. Besides, he is *also keen to set a Euro-trend.*

The Reagan administration is helping him by creating the impression that America is more mobile and arguably stronger without Europe (in bombing Libya, for instance) and capable of coping very well on its own.

There is an obvious link here in that the wider the gap seems to be between Western Europe and the United States the more European Mr Gorbachov makes himself out to be.

He must be delighted by M. Mitterrand's criticism of SDI and Herr *Genscher's criticism of America's* striving for superiority.

Yet it is still not clear whether the Soviet leader sees Western Europe as merely a catchment area should his America policy come a cropper or as an independent feature in his concept *of a multipolar world.*

Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the Bonn Foreign Minister, has endorsed this multipolar view of the world and may have been able to decide for himself in Moscow what importance to attach to it.

M. Mitterrand and Mrs Thatcher have never gone out on a limb on this issue; they have always assumed as a matter of course that they count for something.

Josef Riedmiller
(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 19 July 1986)

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■ WORLD AFFAIRS

Reagan, Gorbachov and arms control negotiations: the path ahead

In this article for *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, Chancellor Kohl's foreign policy adviser, Horst Teltschik, takes a closer look at the state of East-West relations.

Even before President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachov met at last year's Geneva summit it was clear that this meeting would be a success.

On 30 September the Soviet Union made a pre-summit proposal to reduce strategic launcher systems by 50 per cent.

Both sides had started to vie for public opinion.

For the first time in arms-control history Gorbachov indicated the Soviet desire to negotiate with the USA over a drastic arms reduction.

The US Administration replied on 1 November and their counterproposal also included reference to a 50 per cent strategic arms reduction.

The Soviet Union added a proposal for the reduction of medium-range missile systems on 14 October.

Pre-summit preparations had thus already enlivened the arms control dialogue between the two superpowers.

The atmosphere at the summit itself was excellent.

The outcome, however, did not go beyond admittedly important declarations of intent, for example, on the *principle of a five per cent reduction of* nuclear weapons by both countries and on the idea of an interim agreement on medium-range nuclear missiles.

Nevertheless, both sides called the meeting a success, cleverly refraining from publicly talking about winners and losers.

Above all in Europe hopes began to spread that the Geneva summit could represent the start of a new phase in East-West relations.

The Europeans raised the question whether the "spirit of Geneva" would bring about positive effects for Europe and how relations between Western and Eastern Europeans as well as the bilateral relations with the Soviet Union would develop.

Following the Geneva summit the series of new disarmament and arms control proposals continued.

They were made in turn by the two big powers or in unison with the Western Europeans.

All in all, the disarmament and arms control proposals forwarded so far by both sides, by East and West, are comprehensive and far-reaching.

This applies to all negotiation areas, for nuclear systems as well as for conventional arms, for chemical weapons as well as for a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests, on confidence-building measures as well as for questions relating to verification.

Gorbachov has taken a surprising amount of initiative and shown himself to be remarkably flexible.

On key issues he has made substantial moves towards western proposals.

He was willing to take European reservations into consideration.

However, eight months after Geneva there has been no really substantial progress at the conference tables in Geneva, Stockholm and Vienna.

In fact, quite the reverse is true: the MBFR negotiations in Vienna and the negotiations on confidence-building measures and disarmament in Stockholm are stagnating.

At the Geneva negotiations on a worldwide ban on chemical weapons some kind of success is long overdue.

Much to the West's surprise the numerous proposals put forward by Gorbachov do not yet seem to have found their way to the conference tables.

In the second week in June this year Gorbachov suggested a kind of interim solution for the reduction of strategic nuclear systems.

This prompted Reagan to talk of a "turning point" in arms control negotiations.

This is an encouraging sign that things could get moving again.

The American government must also face up to the question of how great its political will for progress is.

Reagan was able to return from the Geneva summit with the fair claim that it was a success.

He satisfied both "camps" at home: the "hawks", since he did not back down from his SDI programme, and the "doves" because he was willing to meet Gorbachov in the first place.

His decision to take military action against Libya guaranteed him overwhelming approval for his foreign policy.

Reagan, therefore, is not under domestic political pressure to bolster his own position by securing speedy results in East-West relations in general or in disarmament negotiations in particular.

Today's America has a new and strong air of self-confidence.

It has overcome the Vietnam and Watergate syndromes, two events which gave many Europeans a feeling of moral superiority.

The policies of the current US Administration are themselves full of mor-

Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger

al rigour and seem to be developing a strong leaning towards unilateralism.

This general approach is reflected in the numerous rebukes and uncompromising demands levelled against the Soviet Union, in the action taken against terrorism and in the forthright expectations that the European allies show greater solidarity and support for American policies.

The results so far, especially the reaction of the Soviet Union itself, would appear to confirm the appropriateness of this approach.

Despite or perhaps because of the SDI research programme the Soviet negotiators have returned to the negotiating table in Geneva, which they left when the Americans began deploying their medium-range missiles in Europe.

President Reagan's recent announcement that he would not respect the limitations laid down in the Salt 2 agreement if the Soviet Union does not cease to violate the agreement was soon followed by a Soviet proposal for a 30 per cent reduction in the number of existing strategic systems.

If this were accepted it would make the Salt 2 agreement obsolete.

It is hardly surprising that some members of the US government feel that their policy towards the Soviet Union is both productive and encouraging.

They feel that the government's assessment of the internal and external weaknesses and strengths of the Soviet system and of the position of Gorbachov is correct.

The 27th Soviet Communist Party conference was only a limited success for Gorbachov.

The conference's personnel-related and issue-related decisions in some cases reflect fundamental contradictions.

Gorbachov must continue to work together with a number of "strong men" in the Central Committee and the Politburo, many of whom at best take a sceptical view of his new policy of greater flexibility.

His foreign policy announcements indicate both a rigid affirmation of an ideologically distorted conception of the world as well as his belief in the need for peaceful cooperation and a greater willingness to compromise in negotiations with the West.

Foreign policy eyesores still exist.

The Afghanistan conflict is still smouldering and Moscow is faced by a political shambles in South Yemen.

The limited military attack on Libya by the USA made it clear how helpless the Soviet Union is in one of the world's major troublespots.

The fact that this coincided with the initiation by Gorbachov of a policy of dialogue with the USA made this an even more bitter pill to swallow.

The reshuffling of personnel and structural changes in the secretariats of the Central Committee revealed the uncertainty or inconsistencies regarding Soviet foreign policy.

Corresponding changes have also been made in the Soviet foreign ministry and major embassies abroad.

The international reputation of the Soviets took a dramatic knock in the wake of the Soviet response to the reactor accident in Chernobyl.

Many experts draw the conclusion that Gorbachov urgently needs breathing space, in particular in the field of military armament, if he is to be able to modernise the Soviet economy, overcome social problems and thus consolidate his own position.

But what conclusions does Gorbachov himself draw?

It would correspond to the Russian mentality were he to tighten the reins at home and try to mobilise all the reserves he can via force, discipline and repression as well as increased material incentives.

He might also be expected to close the ranks of the Warsaw Pact countries and pursue a more aggressive foreign policy.

Or is Gorbachov really determined to adopt structural reforms in the Soviet



Horst Teltschik . . . German interest in keeping East-West talks alive.
(Photo: Archiv)

Union; introduce greater independence for his country's allies and seek dialogue and cooperation with the West at all levels, including greater flexibility in the field of disarmament and arms control?

Gorbachov's public statements and a look at his decisions so far show a mixture of both styles.

Is this because he is *not yet* clear himself what he should do?

How should we - the USA, the alliance as a whole and the Europeans - react in such a situation?

It looks as if the Americans would like to draw different conclusions than the Europeans.

TThis is indicated by the *USA's* recent refusal to signs the *final document* of the CSCE meeting in Berne as well as by the announcement not to respect provisions of the Salt 2 agreement after autumn this year.

Whereas the USA would appear to be increasing pressure on the Soviet Union the Europeans are asking themselves whether it makes sense to try and fence in the Soviets.

Perhaps it would be better to take the initiative to try and establish more dialogue and more cooperation between both sides.

There is currently a risk of stagnation in East-West relations rather than of renewed momentum.

Soviet leaders do not seem to have made their minds up how meaningful it is to negotiate with the current US Administration.

They are not sure whether *President* Reagan wants results and if he does, to what extent.

In this situation Gorbachov would perhaps like to have a greater feeling of certainty than the issues require.

He certainly cannot run the risk of being snubbed in any way by Washington.

It looks as if Gorbachov is still keep-

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■ HOME AFFAIRS

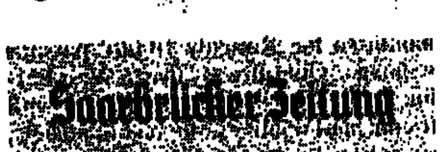
Rau wants Social Democrats to sail clear of Greens

The man who will lead the Social Democrats in the general election in January, Johannes Rau, wants to take stronger action to distance his party from the Greens.

Since becoming the SPD candidate at the beginning of the year, he has repeatedly emphasised that the best election strategy would be to try not to win Green voters over but to look for support instead among wavering CDU and FDP supporters.

Rau used this tactic successfully in the North Rhine-Westphalia election last year. So did Oskar Lafontaine in the Saarland. Both got absolute majorities.

However, this policy is not uniform throughout the Social Democrats. Many members are finding it difficult to depart from the common ground with the Greens; that is left of centre.



The party chairman, Willy Brandt, for example, has often said that he hopes the Social Democrats will moved towards the Greens instead of away from them.

After all, Social Democrats and Greens stood side by side for years in the Peace Movement and still take part together in campaigns against nuclear energy.

Many Social Democrats feel the Greens are part of them, a sort of socialist party to the left of the SPD just like the USPD (Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) party just after the First World War.

Otto Schily, one of the most prominent members of the Greens, might agree. He is often suspected by other Greens of having Social Democratic tendencies.

But despite the fears of the Social Democrats that being seen as an election partner of the Greens will lose them votes, many observers do think that the election will be fought between the two blocks: on one side the centre-right coalition of Christian Democrats, the Christian Social Union and the Free Democrats; and the SPD and Greens on the other.

The coalition party managers are certainly approaching the election in January in this belief.In reality, however, the Greens are not a united political group and certainly not a left-wing party (and not a reactionary one either), as occasionally maintained.

They are a group of people united by their common fear, and a very consorvative kind of fear at that.

Insofar as fear is a completely unpolitical factor the Greens and their protest could be regarded as the rebellion of the unpolitical.

At the same time, however, fear is a political position of bourgeois society.

The peaceful citizen, who stands to lose his possessions and his life in times of social upheaval, has a right to be fearful of change.

The history of the bourgeoisie proves that this fear is justified.

Other classical currents of political thought can be found in the Greens, all of which have their origins in the 19th century: socialism, Communism, liberalism and Romanticism.

This political potpourri mingles within the Greens, vehemently, venomously and sometimes even violently.

In the face of all these internal conflicts the Greens were unable to develop a proper election strategy.

An essential part of power politics is the question of party-political coalitions.

Today, only a few months before the 1987 general election the Greens look deserted and isolated.

This cannot alter the fact that the Greens were and still are an essential thorn in the flesh of a democracy which had tended to become idle and thoughtless.

But can this suffice as a political function?

Perhaps it can, but not in the long run.

During the 1960s we already experienced how an extraparliamentary opposition brought about desirable changes but then disappeared or drifted into radicalness.

Will the Greens suffer a similar fate?

This is not just a question for the Greens themselves, but for us all.

Rudolph Bernhard

(Saarbrücker Zeitung, 12 July 1986)

Germans living overseas get the vote

RHEINISCHE POST

Germans living outside the country will be able to vote in the general election in January.

An amendment to the electoral act makes it possible for the first time for postal votes to be cast in foreign countries.

The Bonn Foreign Office says there are about 550,000 German nationals in other countries. Those in any of the 20 Council of Europe countries will more or less have an unlimited right to vote.

Those in other countries will only be eligible if they have not been living abroad for more than 10 years on election day (27 January, 1987).

They will all be able to vote by post. The Foreign Office says the Warsaw Pact countries have also indicated that they will allow West Germans living on their territory to vote. A final decision, however, has yet to be taken.

East Germany is the only country *which* has rejected the idea outright. There are about 12,000 West Germans in East Germany who are affected by the change in law. Although the 12,000 have taken East German citizenship they are still regarded as West Germans by the West Germans and therefore would be eligible to vote under the Federal Republic Constitution, the Basic Law.

The largest groups of German nationals entitled to vote live in Australia and France (48,000 in each), Switzerland (41,000), Italy and Belgium (38,000 each) and the USA (33,000).

13,000 Germans will be able to vote in South Africa and Namibia.

Germans who want to vote must fill in a form which will put them on the register of the district they last lived in Germany.

(Rheinische Post, Düsseldorf, 15 July 1986)

Continued from page 2

ing all options open. This is indicated by the fact that he has repeatedly stated that he is willing to meet Reagan for a second time in Washington some time this year.

If the Soviet leaders opt for a negative approach, however, this could mean that there will be no substantial movement in East-West relations for some time to come.

For us Europeans stagnation soon means a step backwards.

This is particularly true for the Federal Republic of Germany.

The effects of stagnation are felt immediately.

East German leader Erich Honecker and the Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov are still unable to pay the official visits to the Federal Republic they postponed in September last year.

Czechoslovakia still hasn't given more specific details of an official invitation already given to Chancellor Helmut Kohl to visit the country.

Environmental protection agreements with East Germany and Czechoslovakia are still waiting to be signed.

During the first six months of 1986 high-ranking visitors from all Eastern European countries came to Bonn.

During their talks with Chancellor Kohl they expressed their clear desire to intensify comprehensive bilateral ties.

This can only take place, however, if the overall political climate between the USA and the Soviet Union improves.

Only then will these Eastern European countries feel confident enough to take their own initiative.

Their cautiousness may be exaggerated, but it is understandable in view of their previous experiences.

We European, in particular we Germans, are therefore particularly interested in sustaining East-West dialogue.

We must remain interested in more progress in fields of disarmament and arms control, since political tension and armament have more direct effects on us as a divided country on the dividing line between East and West.

The addressees of our efforts have been and are Washington and Moscow, our Western European alliance partners, above all France and Britain, our Eastern European neighbours, and multilateral conferences.

In confidential letters Chancellor Kohl has regularly informed both Gorbachov and Reagan about the proposals of the Bonn government.

What is more, he has made suggestions to Gorbachov how the CSCE process and bilateral ties between Bonn and Moscow can be improved.

The visit to Moscow by Foreign Minister Genscher is a sign that these seeds may bear fruit.

Horst Teltschik

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 17 July 1986)

Ceiling set on tax-deductible party donations

The Federal Constitutional Court has decided that only political party donations of less than DM100,000 will be tax-deductible. But the court dismissed legal action by the Greens to stop the allocation of block grants from public funds for the political education activities of four foundations closely allied to the CDU, CSU, SPD and FDP. Otto Schily of the Greens said his party is now to set up its own foundation.

The case in which the Federal Constitutional Court decided that only political party donations of less than DM100,000 will be tax deductible arose out of the Flick donations affair in which the giant group is alleged to have won tax concessions after donating money to party funds.

The extent of donations will no longer be assessed according to the income, turnover or earnings of the donating party, since this, says the Court would violate against the principle of equal opportunities.

Party treasurers are certain to complain, but the judges felt that the possible political influence exerted by major donors could do more damage than depleted party funds.

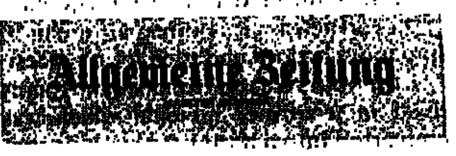
It was too obvious that the political parties in their capacity as lawmakers wanted to solve their own financial problems as well as clarify a legal loophole by amending the Parties Act.

The Court, however, felt that a mere legalisation of party funding procedures was not enough. The judges laid down norms of political ethics.

The parties may find some comfort in the fact that the Constitutional Court decided not to prohibit the block grants to the parties' political foundations.

This is perhaps all the more surprising in view of the recent rumours that the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, which is closely allied to the SPD, was used to launder donations to the SPD.

For the Greens, a party which already lives to a substantial degree off "public



money", the Court's decision means more cash.

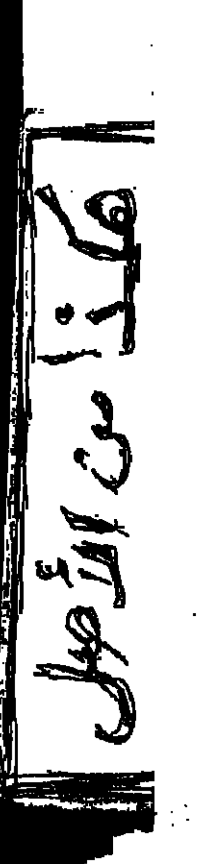
On the one hand, the other parties will find it more difficult to tap the really big donors; on the other hand, the judges more or less recommended that the Greens set up their own political foundations so that they too be entitled to a block grant.

The parties are now called upon to find a sound legal solution to the problem.

In view of the fact that since the Flick affair donations to political parties have become few and far between the Court's upper limit of DM100,000 for tax-deductible donations may prove to point in the right direction.

Party treasurers would be more than pleased if future donors gave them that much.

(Allgemeine Zeitung, Mainz, 15 July 1986)



■ FOCUS

West Berlin crisis: asylum seekers keep pouring in

The number of asylum seekers arriving in the Federal Republic has reached such proportions that accommodation is packed beyond capacity and politicians are unable to find solutions. The problem will be raised by the Bonn Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, with the Russians when he visits Moscow. In the first six months of the year, more than 42,000 people officially asked for asylum, more than the entire 1984 figure. Last year 73,000 applied. Since January, nearly 23,000 have arrived in West Berlin — 3,300 in June alone. The Prime Minister of Bavaria, Franz Josef Strauss, has called for an alteration to Basic Law, the Bonn Constitution, to dam the tide. At the moment the Constitution gives everybody the right to apply for asylum. Most come through West Berlin because it is easy. They are flown into East Berlin's airport and transferred by bus to Friedrichstrasse station on the border with West Berlin which is policed only by East Berlin. The West regards the border as not a legitimate international one. If official border checks were set up on the Western side, fears are that East Berlin would be able to claim that this legitimised East Berlin's claim to being a separate international entity instead of part of a city under four-power control. Fears have been expressed that this is the very reason East Berlin is doing nothing to halt the flow.

The number of refugees is stretching West Berlin's resources to the utmost. Since autumn last year the number of beds available has been increased from 4,500 to 7,100. But there is still no room.

Various buildings have been converted into hostels and some refugees are even living in building workers' site huts.

The refugee relief section of the German Red Cross has asked Berlin's Social Affairs Senator, Ulf Fink, to help.

Fink feels that there are two solutions: "The refugees must be allocated to the *Länder* much faster, and we are going to have to set up special camps with tents."

Fink only recently had to ask the administrative authorities of the the various Berlin districts to provide an additional 750 beds.

This kind of response to the problem only works by exerting considerable political pressure.

In Berlin-Zehlendorf Senator Fink even ordered that a sports hall be made available for the influx of refugees.

Spandau is one district which has long since fulfilled its allocation quota.

Nevertheless, it is doing all it can to find more accommodation for refugees.

Last year, a large number of Tamils lived in a former hospital which was converted into a hostel.

For a short period this hostel was empty because the East German authorities refused to allow Tamils to travel to West Berlin via East Berlin.

Now the hostel is again absolutely packed.

1,059 refugees are accommodated in a hostel which was intended to accommodate 750 people.

Two-thirds of this group come from Iran, the rest mainly from India, Lebanon, Pakistan and Turkey.

The Persian interpreter is currently trying to find accommodation for three families which spent the night out on the streets.

One big problem is that, although the refugees are given accommodation vouchers worth DM15 to DM20 when they arrive in Berlin they are often unable to find a place to stay.

The vouchers are labelled *Pension nach Wahl* (Guest-house of your choice) and many refugees wander around looking for a guest-house called *nach Wahl*.

Those who do understand the German on the voucher soon discover that the cheapest rooms are already taken.

So it's left up to the districts, the Red Cross, the workers' welfare association and the churches to find help the refugees find accommodation.

"The *Diakonisches Werk*," Fink complains, "has only provided an additional 22 places. They all refer to the fact that it's holiday time at the moment."

The head of the Red Cross hostel explained that a fire station in Alt-Lietzow was able to accommodate 32 refugees.

Many people who work for the district authorities dealing with the refugee problem feel unable to cope.

They don't even know which refugees from which countries can be given accommodation in the same place so as to avoid nationality problems.

Most of them only have a vague idea of the special kinds of food certain groups of refugees eat.

In many cases, the refugee relief workers are called out of bed in the middle of the night if some refugee family has run out of baby food.

The situation of these refugees has worsened dramatically.

During the first six months of this year 42,268 persons officially registered as persons seeking asylum in the Federal Republic of Germany including West Berlin.

This figure exceeded the figure for the whole of 1984.

Last year, 73,832 persons applied for asylum.

Since January 22,789 refugees have come to West Berlin via East Germany.

In June alone the figure was 3,367, the highest figure reached in any one month so far. Roughly 10,000 persons seeking asylum already live in West Berlin, 3,000 or so in their own flats or with friends and relatives, the rest in hostels, guest-houses, sports halls and hut accommodation of the kind used by building workers.

The containers on the carpark outside of the Federal Garden Show all have electricity and water and provide accommodation for 42 single refugees.

One of Senator Fink's more recent visits to assess the extent of the problem was to a school in Spandau.

One hundred Iranians are accommodated in the school's two gymnasiums and are provided with food by the Red Cross.

The sports halls were originally planned for use in case of disaster.

Fifty bunk beds in sets of four to six have been set up along the wall and in the corners.

A sheet which hangs down gives the families at least a bit of privacy.

There's a television set in one corner with German-language programmes, and suitcases are jammed between the beds.

The Iranians themselves tell the Senator that they are satisfied with the accommodation "for a transitional period."

One man explains that his father was questioned for a whole week about his son's disappearance.

More and more Iranians start listening to what the young man has to say and soon there are Iranians standing all round the table.

Most of them come from Teheran and Kermanshah and have qualified professions: book-keepers, English teachers, nurses or engineers.

Many were persecuted because of their opposition to the Khomeini regime and some of them were put in prison several times.

One woman showed burn marks on her feet; she was tortured with burning cigarettes.

One Iranian explained why there are so many Iranian refugees at the moment:

"Once you've been in prison you're watched all the time; just one denunciation and they pick you up again.

"The Pasdaran force their way into your house.

"More recently more and more young men are being conscripted. Ninety per cent of them then get killed in battle."

The escape route of these Iranians usually passes through Turkey.

They are often robbed along the way the women raped or some refugees even murdered.

In Turkey, where refugees are only allowed to stay for a short period the refugees have no rights at all.



Very often they run the risk of being sent back to Iran and are only too willing to pay large sums of money for a visa and a plane ticket.

In many cases this is a forged transit visa and a ticket in a flight with the East German airline company Interflug to Berlin-Schönefeld (East Berlin).

The price is between $3,000 and $4,000.

In Schönefeld the refugees are then hustled into busses without being asked and driven to West Berlin.

"We then wake up and discover that we're in Berlin, even though we really wanted to go to Canada, the USA or Australia where we have relatives", one refugee explained.

The embassies of these countries in

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East Berlin will not close the floodgates

The Federal government has failed to persuade East Berlin to halt the growing tide of refugees from Africa and Asia seeking asylum in West Berlin.

This is odd, because a year ago East Berlin agreed to a Bonn request to refuse transit permission for Sri Lanka Tamils who lacked a visa for the Federal Republic.

The influx of Sri Lankan Tamils to West Berlin, which had reached alarming proportions, has now stopped.

Last February East Berlin also agreed to a Bonn request to extend the arrangement to passport holders from several other countries.

Bonn hoped the agreement over the Sri Lankan Tamils had been extended to asylum applicants from all Afro-Asian countries. Its hopes have been dashed.

East Berlin says now that transit traffic to West Berlin is not affected by the agreement because West Berlin is under four-power allied control and not part of the Federal Republic.

The Soviet Union was said at the time to be to blame for this change of mind by East Berlin, adding a Berlin status dimension to the issue of applicants for asylum.

Moscow, it was said, had criticised the terms of the agreement on Sri Lankan Tamils, and as the Soviet Union had the last word on all matters relating to Berlin, East Germany had been obliged to exclude West Berlin from the arrangement reached with the Federal Republic.

We may never know whether this was what really happened, but the influx of asylum applicants undeniably presents the East with a welcome opportunity of emphasising its views on the status of Berlin.

East Germany has no qualms about channelling Afro-Asian refugees from Schönefeld airport, just outside Berlin, to the three Western sectors of the divided city. From there they are sent via the transit routes to the West.

Aeroflot and the East German airline, Interflug, net handsome hard-currency profits from this traffic, making it even more attractive for the East.

The unhindered influx of asylum applicants from East to West Berlin is not merely a problem of cut-price air fares to Schönefeld, as the Berlin Senator for Home Affairs seems to think.

It is clearly being used by the East as a lever by which to amend the status the city, as is evident in other contexts.

The East Germans failed, but only because the three Western Allies took a tough line, in their bid to make diplomats accredited in East Berlin show their passports when crossing the Wall.

Staff of military and consular missions accredited to the Allies in West Berlin were only to be allowed into East Berlin if they held visas.

These moves, like the influx of asylum applicants, were attacks on the status of Berlin.

After a terrorist bomb raid on a West Berlin discotheque the Berlin police were ordered by the three Western Allies to check travellers crossing the Wall.

They did so for a while and the move was enthusiastically welcomed by East German leader Erich Honecker. It is 25 years since the Berlin Wall was built and the East clearly feels it has come within striking distance of success in Berlin.

The East Bloc's aim has always been to make West Berlin appear to be a de facto independent political entity under Four-Power control and separate and distinct from the Federal Republic of Germany.

It misses no opportunity of excluding East Berlin from Four-Power responsibility for Berlin as a whole, insisting on the Wall being an international frontier and consolidating East Berlin's international acceptance as an integral part and the capital city of the German Democratic Republic.

By inundating West Berlin with asy

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■ GERMANY

Affair of the alleged shop-lifting spy settled with his return to East Berlin

The affair of the alleged shop-lifter spy, Herbert Meissner, has been apparently resolved — he has returned to East Berlin after an interview in which he told Ludwig Relinger, a Secretary of State in the Bonn Ministry of Intra-German Affairs, that he was not being forced against his will to go back. The affair began when Meissner, 59, a senior official in the East Berlin Academy of Sciences, was caught allegedly stealing a shower tap worth 30 marks in a West Berlin store. He is then reported to have said he wanted to defect. But he disappeared from his Munich hotel and turned up at the East Berlin mission in Bonn where he claimed that he had escaped after being abducted. He is suspected of having worked as a courier for the East German intelligence service. The abduction charge has been strongly denied.

The *Meissner* affair was beginning to weigh heavily on relations between *the two* Germanies. The complications were only compounded when the director of public prosecutions issued a warrant for Meissner's arrest.

East Berlin had demanded his immediate return to East Berlin. Bonn government spokesman Friedhelm Ost said he was not allowed to leave the Federal Republic.

The Chancellor's Office in Bonn is reported to have called on East Berlin to ensure that Professor Meissner presented himself voluntarily to the West German authorities to clarify matters.

East Berlin claims Professor Meissner was abducted by the West German intelligence service, the Munich-based *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND). Then he went to the East German mission in Bonn.

Uwe Ronneburger, deputy leader of the Free Democratic parliamentary party in Bonn, has accused East Berlin of imposing a burden on intra-German relations by virtue of its behaviour in the Meissner affair.

He said it was absurd to allege that East German official had been abducted by the BND, whereas the Federal government's demand for an interview with Professor Meissner to find out at first hand what he wanted was entirely justified.

The affair, elevated by East Germany to this status, began when Professor Meissner was caught shoplifting in a West Berlin department store.

Apprehended in connection with a spare part for a garden watering device, he conveyed the impression of seeing no other solution to the problem than to approach the BND in Pullach, a suburb of Munich.

In a talk with BND officials he is said to have revealed details of the mission he claimed to have been sent to the West to carry out. He was then assumed to have links with the Ministry of State Security in East Berlin.

At the end of his talk he said he would make a full statement on 15 July. There was not even a hint that he had any intention of returning to East Berlin.

Yet he failed to turn up at the time and place arranged, appearing at East Berlin's mission in Bonn instead. East Berlin authorities have nothing to say about how he travelled from Munich to Bonn.

Chief public prosecutor Kurt Rebmann told the Chancellor's Office he had ordered a probe. He suspected Professor Meissner was a courier using his official capacity as cover.

Both the spokesman for the chief public prosecutor's office and the state secretary at the Chancellor's Office in charge of intelligence affairs have strongly refuted East German claims.

State secretary Schreckenberger said East Berlin's claim that Professor Meissner had been abducted was objectively mistaken and could be proved wrong.

Professor Meissner had stated he had come to the Federal Republic voluntarily and had said what he had to say of his own free will. This was definitely specified in the case file.

Professor Meissner, a Dresden economist, held key positions at the hub of politics and academic and scientific research in East Germany.

As assistant general secretary of the Academy of Sciences and president of Urania, a popular science association, he was associated with anti-SDI propaganda.

East Berlin concentrates the its academic and scientific elite in the various departments of the Academy of Sciences, which has a payroll of roughly 20,000.

It is directly responsible to the government and plays a part in political decision-making.



Professor Meissner . . . back home. (Photo: dpa)

Professor Meissner, 59, is married to a scientist 20 years younger than he is. She is his third wife.

He joined the Communist Party after the war as an 18-year-old and was sent to Leningrad by the Russians for an additional course of study.

His case resembles the spectacular defection to the West by Lt-Col. Klaus-Dieter Rauschenbach over five years ago.

Rauschenbach, who defected on 2 June 1981, was interrogated by the BND in Munich. The Chancellor's Office allowed his wife to visit him. He returned with her to the Democratic Republic.

A parliamentary commission of enquiry was set up at the insistence of the Christian Democrats, then the Opposi*tion, but it abandoned its enquiries* when the CDU-led coalition returned to power in Bonn in October 1982.

Herbert Meissner seems to have telephoned his wife in East Berlin after his interview with BND officials and then to have decided first to go to East Berlin's mission in Bonn.

Security officials are not ruling out the possibility that the whole affair was staged by East Berlin to upset intra-German relations.

The affair has been discussed by the Bonn Cabinet.

(Die Welt, Bonn, 17 July 1986)

Continued from page 4

Ankara, however, are closed to the refugees.

According to the Iranians themselves, about 300,000 fellow Iranians are waiting in Turkey for a chance to travel to a western country.

"The United Nations should take a closer look at the situation in Turkey," said one woman, "to make sure that we are not robbed or deceived there until we leave."

Originally, she wanted to go to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva.

Senator Fink asked the Iranians how they see their future.

They all said they want to go back home as soon as possible.

Do they feel that things will change in Iran in the near future, the Senator asked them.

"Injustice cannot last," said one refugee.

A third of the refugees who came to Berlin this year are Iranians, and at the moment half of those who come are Iranians.

Most of them stand a good chance of being granted asylum; the ratio for Iranians is forty per cent. The second largest group includes Lebanese and Palestinians, followed by Indians and Ghanaians.

They are less likely to be granted asylum.

However, no-one is sent back to Lebanon.

Senator Fink feels that a great deal would be easier if the authorities worked faster.

"It takes six weeks before a refugee can be sent on to the Länder."

The asylum proceedings in the reception camp in Zirndorf take one-and-a-half years.

The administrative courts are only now dealing with cases brought forward in 1982.

Does the Senator know an answer to the problem?

"Although I fully appreciate that someone faced by serious problems wants to leave his country, the problem can only be solved in the country of origin or in neighbouring countries, where refugees can be most easily integrated."

Joachim Nawrocki

(Die Zeit, Hamburg, 18 July 1986)

■ FINANCE

Governments learn to beware of the Five Wise Men carrying a report

Süddeutsche Zeitung

Every year in the middle of November, five academics in dark suits visit the Chancellor in Bonn to hand over a weighty tome containing their views about economic affairs at home and abroad.

Every year, the political parties scan the report for passages that support their own views.

Interpretations placed on the report's findings are not always right. Ideas are often misinterpreted. But the five economists have got used to it.

The five are the council of economic advisers, better known as the Five Wise Men. They have been compiling their reports since 1963.

They were appointed by the Bundesrat, or Upper House of the Bonn Bundestag, much to the annoyance of Chancellor Adenauer, who didn't like advice of this kind.

They have been submitting annual reports to successive Bonn governments ever since. They also issue special reports if there are pressing economic reasons.

Governments seldom like what they read in the reports. They are non-partisan. The Five are able to outline their economic principles as they see fit against the background of given economic conditions.

Chairman Hans Karl Schneider sees the council's role as that of a regulative conscienced, a role he outlined in greater detail at a Protestant Academy seminar in Tutzing, Bavaria.

It dealt with political advice to the government by the council of economic advisers, and Professor Schneider felt called on to assess the Federal government's economic policy performance from this angle.

His opinion will not, as always, be particularly welcome in Bonn. In terms of school grades the rating he gave the government was a poor C, or barely satisfactory.

In finance policy the government can unquestionably count on the credit side its consolidation of the Federal budget. The public-sector borrowing requirement has been brought to a halt.

Yet on closer scrutiny the government's performance is seen not to have been particularly successful. The public-sector borrowing requirement has been pruned at the expense of capital investment.

Cuts may also have been made on the consumer side but they have been largely offset by fresh commitments in the form of financial aid pledges to all manner of groups.

Professor Schneider, like his fellow-members of the council Professor Helmstädter and Professor Hesse, was dissatisfied with the government's track record on tax reform too.

They would sooner have seen all financial policy forces joined in a bid to boost growth.

The government has not been very meritorious in structural policy either, it seems, *while in competition the opening* of markets leaves much to be desired.

The government's showing is felt to be appalling on subsidies. Chancellor Kohl's government set out to prune subsidies and tax breaks. Instead it has added even more — surely a cardinal sin.

This "report form" almost donveyed the impression that the Five Wise Men feel the economy is on the mend despite policies pursued by the Bonn government and not as a result of them.

It is all the more striking that the three members of the council who attended the Tutzing seminar saw wages as the pacemaker of sound economic policy in the context of an economic upswing that is now into its fourth year.

Wages have for years grown more slowly than the sum total of productivity and inflation, leading to an improved price-cost ratio and laying the groundwork for the wave of investment that has been under way for some time.

The council are slightly disappointed at the government's failure to stagger wage increases by sector to a greater extent. On balance, however, wage policies over the past three years are felt to have been a textbook example of how to sustain an upswing.

Otto Schlecht, state secretary at the Federal Economic Affairs Ministry, had little choice but to accept the council's criticism of official economic policies.

There could, he said, be no denying that mistakes had been made in regulative policy; he spent half his working life "nipping nonsense in the bud."

His main request to the Five Wise Men was governed by the problems he is bound to face as a man who has to live with the assessors' fine words and must accept that they are right in theory yet unable to put them into political practice.

He called on Professor Schneider and his colleagues to bear this factor more in mind, but they would hear nothing of the idea. Their report, they said, must be based on the yardstick of what was objectively right and not what was merely feasible.

This tension between ivory tower and political reality will continue to govern relations between advisers and advised. Neither find it easy to live with.

At times the Five feel frustrated when their ideas are not paid sufficient political heed. Conversely, *politicians* feel their toes are trodden *on* more often than they are prepared to admit.

Chancellor Kohl has an entirely pragmatic solution to such problems. Whenever anyone mentions mistakes in regulative policy his government is said to have made he replies:

"I want to win the next elections and not the Ludwig Erhard Prize."

Helmut Maier-Mannhart

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 15 July 1986)

Ban on overtime would create 200,000 jobs — ministry survey

A report by the Labour Minister, Norbert Blüm, says that on average, every person in employment worked just over 70 hours of overtime last year — not good news in a country with more than two million unemployed.

The report says that between 1983 and 1985, the amount of overtime increased by 80 million hours to just over 1.5 billion.

It cautiously estimates that if overtime were not worked, 200,000 jobs could be created. But Herr Blüm feels it is not yet time to ban overtime.

The Social Democrats disagree. Anke Fuchs, deputy chairman of the parliamentary party, says that merely registering the increase in overtime and doing nothing about it was a cynical attitude in the face of high unemployment.

Herr Blüm says the present increase in overtime is moderate compared with the overtime worked in past times of economic improvement. All he plans to do is encourage both sides in wage agreements to agree to voluntarily reduce overtime.

Frau Fuchs feels it is wrong to leave it entirely to employers, the trade unions and works councils to cut overtime.

She rightly recalls that the SPD tried but failed effectively to limit overtime and that the SPD government in North Rhine-Westphalia plans top impose a fiscal ban on overtime.

At the beginning of 1984, Herr Blüm agreed that legal steps were needed. He presented an Employment Promotion Bill in which overtime was to be paid in time off instead of cash.

Anyone working more than two hours overtime a week was to take time off rather than time and a half.

In autumn 1985, the social committees (working-class wings) of the Christian Democrats (the party of Chancellor Kohl and Herr Blüm) called for government measures to lay down a framework for limiting overtime when management and unions were unable to agree.

Herr Blüm, who is national chairman of the social committees, now says in connection with the overtime report that the government will keep a close eye on developments and discuss with employers and unions *what move* might be necessary.

That is simply not enough. What is needed is a framework to establish legal limits to overtime.

A point [illegible] emphasise on forming the overtime report that calls for attention: employers are called on to improve training facilities and ensure availability of sufficient skilled staff.

The report — and this is the point — indicates that skilled men and women work the most overtime.

The report also makes clear another important point: As 60 per cent of people who work overtime are prepared to work less overtime, it may be assumed that people don't work overtime for the sheer pleasure of it. They need the money.

That really ought to make Christian and Free Democrat economic, financial and social policymakers stop and think.

Many of them feel wages simply can't be low enough and want to ease the tax burden on higher-income groups when tax reforms are mooted. *Gerda Strack*

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 10 July 1986)

■ BUSINESS

ITT sale creates a massive French rival for Siemens



American multinational International Telephone & Telegraph, now known as ITT, has sold its international telecommunications business to a holding company owned by France's state-owned Compagnie Générale d'Electricité (CGE) for about $1.8bn.

This is a drastic change of direction in ITT policies, the US giant founded by the Caribbean sugar baron Sosthenes Behn in 1920 with telecommunications forming the nucleus of the operation.

The sale of these telecommuncations interests will alter the European telecommunications market at a blow.

CGE is high on French Premier Jacques Chirac's list of companies to be *privatised and* the company will now be the second largest source of public telecommunications facilities in the world, *after* the US giant American Telephone & Telegraph (AT&T).

The new European holding company for ITT's telecommunications interests will have a turnover of about DM12bn, almost twice as much as the organisation's nearest European rival, West Germany's Siemens.

Telecommunications has for ages been a sluggish business, hovering between state postal monopolies and accredited suppliers. But over the past few years the industry has been on the move, mainly due to technological developments.

Digital switches in telecommunications have led the way to international communications' networks that can simultaneously relay speech, text, data and pictures.

National telecommunications officials have turned out to be pace-makers in the international competition revolving round efficient communications systems.

The manufacturers' world has also been altered by the penetration of computerisation and office and communications technology.

Firms that have grown large in only one of these fields are now seeking to cover the whole range by acquiring companies or through cooperation agreements.

Competition became more and more intense as the business was increasingly *internationalised*.

AT&T, without doubt, gave the clearest evidence of this. Four years ago, after a tough anti-trust battle involving its 22 regional telephone companies, the independent giant organisation let there be no doubt about the strategy it proposed to pursue.

After it had purchased Olivetti in 1983 it entered into a cooperation agreement with the Philips organisation that was equally striving to gain a footing in telecommunications.

The computer multinational IBM also elbowed its way into the telecommunications business, AT&T had already put up a challenge to IBM in the computer market.

Under pressure from Washington the Japanese Nippon Telegraph & Telegraph (NTT) organisation has been forced to open up its doors to foreign suppliers and the US giant is waiting in the wings at the ready.

Both leading Japanese suppliers, NEC and Fujitsu, might well soon move into the markets of their keenest competitors in some strength.

There are three suppliers to international markets who stand on technological firm ground — AT&T with their ESS 5 system, the Canadian Northern Telecom that has been extremely successful in the American market, and Siemens with their electronic system EWSD.

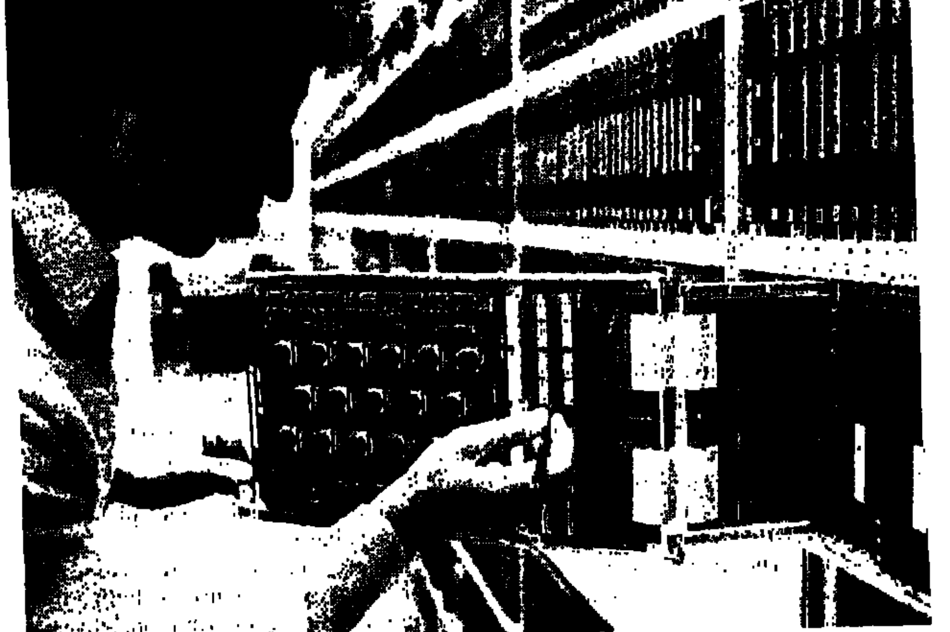
Among the new arrivals in telecommunications there are good prospects for SEL, the West German ITT subsidiary, whose System 12 has had a promising start in the Federal Republic. It is here that the French interest lies in the liaison with ITT. CGE is technically poorly fitted out to meet the future, so the CGE managers will now not only be able to offer a competitive telecommunications system but, via the successful ITT subsidiary SEL, gain access to the German telecommunications market.

This strategic advantage is significant, because basically a "common" European telecommunications market does not exist. As ever national postal authorities reserve their business for domestic suppliers and keep foreign manufacturers at a distance.

This is why Siemens, despite its excellent technology, does not have a foothold in the British or French markets. By the same token foreign firms do not do much better with contracts from the Bundespost, the Federal Postal Administration.

It is about time that Brussels took steps to de-regulate this important market, important for Europe's international competitive position.

Without an adequately large domestic market European suppliers, faced with competition, will have yet another obstacle to overcome.



Loud and clear. SEL, the German subsidiary of ITT, has developed this telecommunications system known as System 12. (Photo: SEL)

System 12, developed by SEL and ITT's Belgian subsidiary Bell Telephone, represents an investment of at least a billion dollars. The deployment of resources to this extent will soon be impossible without a sound base market.

There is the danger here that suppliers, cut off from their immediate European competitors and with their innovation capability falling behind, will seek salvation in partnership with American or Japanese competitors.

These would not be looking to the Europeans for superior technology, even less with a view to cooperation on equal footing, but as an easy means of gaining access to a market.

The provincialism common in Europe up till now has other consequences. In order to surmount barriers and gain access to markets companies are encouraged to merge. There is already talk that the French will take on board Italian, British and Belgian telecommunications interests — certainly not just to spread the purchase price burden of about DM5bn over several shoulders.

It is grotesque that lamentable factors such as the refusal to allow fair market opportunities prompts companies to seek an undesirable solution, and a solution that does competitivity no good at all, namely a concentration of forces.

It is obvious that Siemens boss Karlheinz Kaske will use the first opportunity to demand unimpeded access to the French market.

Siemens has a base from which to operate in the French market, the former ITT subsidiary that was nationalised in 1982, Compagnie Générale de Constructions Telephoniques (CGCT). Through this company Siemens could introduce its EWSD system to the French.

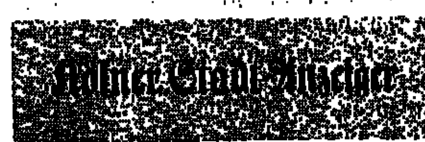
Of course, this will depend on whether the Paris government is prepared to take its foot off the brakes to some extent.

In political circles Bonn should make use of this deal between ITT and CGE, that has brought changes to the European telecommunications market, to call for a less regulated market, if only to a limited extent.

Hans Otto Eglau

(Die Zeit, Hamburg, 11 July 1986)

Commission suspicious about mergers between industries



The Monopolies Commission looks with suspicion at mergers between big companies from different industries on the grounds that they can create economic power centres and distort competition.

The opinion is in a report which has been submitted to Economic Affairs Minister Martin Bangemann.

The Commission had the Daimler-Benz and AEG merger in mind when it compiled the report, and said that it regarded merger laws as inadequate.

The report says that it is essential to give thought to the control arrangements within the merger and their aims.

A majority in the Commission proposed that the reference to "market domination" should not be used in considering the merits of inter-industry mergers because it was a difficult to prove.

Mergers of this sort should be prohibited if there were no clear advantages. Major mergers are always dubious from a competition and social point of view, the report said.

An assesment of the competitive situation in the case of Daimler-Benz and AEG shows clearly that an appreciation of the retail market without an overall view is not enough.

It is not just a question of reciprocal dependence on markets but there are also considerations involving the creation of a market power centre.

The Commission warned against verifiable influences on decisions made by political institutions, and reproached the Cartels Office in Berlin for not having examined whether AEG could build up a monopoly position in the electrical appliances retail market with Daimler-Benz behind it.

The Commission also looked critically at banking. Concentration among banks has increased, and they are much involved in concealed mergers.

For this reason the Commission reaffirmed its demand that a bank's interest in another company should be limited to five per cent.

However the Commission does not regard that the constant trend towards mergers disturbs the functions of the free market system. The same comment was made in the 1982 and 1984 reports.

But in saying this the Commission assumes that foreign trade policies remain liberal and competition policies remain constant.

Minister Bangemann said that the Commission had not called for extensive amendments to legislation dealing with limits to competition nor recommended an extension of state intervention.

Emphasis was given in the report to the view that company mergers did not have any verifiable influence on prices and jobs.

The Commission called for an extensive examination and reappraisal of state involvement in competition.

In too many sectors the state tries to intervene to influence market performance.

The Commission chairman Erhard Kantzenbach also criticised the state governments in Munich and Stuttgart for encouraging mergers. They should not meddle in these affairs.

Kantzenbach is to be succeeded as Commission chairman by Göttingen lawyer Ulrich Immenga.

Heinz-Joachim Melder

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 9 July 1986)

ENERGY

Germany, Saudi Arabia in joint solar plan

Saudi Arabia and West Germany are sharing the 34-million-mark costs of a project to improve solar energy yields through the use of hydrogen.

A 100-kilowatt plant is to be built in Riyadh and a research unit is to be built in Stuttgart.

The ground for the project was laid when Baden-Württemberg Premier Lothar Späth visited Saudi Arabia in 1983. Because of structural change ahead, the project is expected to be enormously important.

The world's energy system is in line for conversion to non-fossil fuels.

Unlimited combustion of fossil fuels causes environmental pollution and rapidly depletes finite resources. Since Chernobyl more and more people have come to feel that atomic energy does not hold the key to a solution.

The German-Saudi Arabian project is based on solar energy, the oldest source of energy harnessed by man.

About 20,000 times more solar energy is released earthwards than we use on Earth, so it is plentifully available. But it is hard to harness.

Light can be converted into electric power by photovoltaics, but much of this power, like heat, is lost in transport and it is hard to store.

Besides, solar energy is not released at all densely. These are all factors difficult to reconcile with the structure of our present energy system, which relies on transportable, storable, high-density fossil fuels.

German and Saudi Arabian scientists are probing these problems as part of the Hysolar project, bearing in mind that in theory the solution has long been self-evident.

It is that solar energy must be transferred to a substance that combines the advantages of fossil fuels — density, storability and transportability — without having their disadvantages.

Hydrogen is the substance, say Carl-Jochen Winter and Werner H. Bloss of Stuttgart.

Professor Winter is a board member of the DVFLR Aerospace Research Establishment, Professor Bloss is head of Stuttgart University department of physical electronics.

Hydrogen can burnt without residue. It can be piped enormous distances and stored in tanks. It is a fine fuel and no more dangerous to handle than conventional motor fuel.

Until the early 1970s town gas, the predecessor of natural gas, was 60 per cent hydrogen.

"The technologies needed to harness hydrogen as a fuel all already exist," says Professor Winter. "What now matters (and will matter in future) is further development to boost the energy yield."

This is the aim of the Hysolar project, a hybrid word combining hy for hydrogen and solar for Sun.

The nucleus of the project is a 100-kilowatt pilot plant to be built in Riyadh over the next two years.

It and other parts of the project, including a research unit to be built in Stuttgart next spring, will cost DM34m.

Saudi Arabia and the Federal Republic are to share the cost, with Baden-Württemberg footing 50 per cent of the German bill.

Stuttgart University and the Aerospace Research Establishment are investing a further DM7.2m and have set up a joint solar research venture, Insolar.

Water and electric power are needed to produce hydrogen. The electricity splits water molecules into hydrogen and oxygen. This technique — nothing new — forms the basis of the Hysolar project.

The electric power comes from solar cells, silicium-plated panels that convert sunlight straight into power. But it will take 1,000 square metres of solar cells to generate 100 kilowatts.

Experimental targets of the Hysolar project include electrolytic generation of hydrogen, generating electric power and, above all, running pilot plant on a long-term basis.

The new source of energy must be put to practical everyday use, including uncertainties such as distribution, storage, transport and consumer use by industry, local authorities and private households.

While Hysolar solar cells harness sunlight, another departure in solar energy research and development concentrates on solar heat.

The experimental phase has been completed in connection with solarthermics too, Professors Winter and Bloss say. Again, the principle is straightforward.

Mirrors known as heliostats trap the Sun's rays and reflect them in bundles on to a heat carrier that generates steam which drives a power turbine.

Half a dozen experimental solarthermic power stations are currently on trial around the world, although not much more can be learnt from them.

A German-Spanish project will expire at the end of this year and be handed over to Spain. "The next step," say Bloss and Werner, "must be to progress toward the 30-to 40-megawatt range."

There is even talk of building a solarthermic power station with an installed capacity of 100 megawatts or so, but future pilot projects will no longer be a matter of basic research.

The aim must now be long-term trials, optimum output and maintenance.

Experience so far indicates a division of labour between solarthermic and photovoltaic techniques, the two professors say. Photovoltaics is best suited for lower, solarthermics for higher output of several megawatts or more.

Both men are convinced solar energy has a bright future. Since Chernobyl the question asked has been whether solar energy might take the place of the world's 300-plus nuclear power stations.

This question is arguably the wrong approach. Bloss and Werner would sooner see how the wide range of ways in which solar energy can be harnessed can be best used to rule out the need to build more conventional (and nuclear) power stations.

Professor Winter is convinced the potential is enormous. "The Federal Republic's GNP could be produced with half the energy now needed," he says, "merely by using solar energy and by energy-saving techniques, such as insulation or lower fuel consumption by the 30 million cars on German roads."

It will be decades before these possibilities have been worked out and tested; decades during which atomic energy is likely to continue to be with us.

Time is needed; so is money. The public sector has been more than generous in the past in subsidising nuclear research. The Bonn Research and Tech-

Continued on page 9

Glittering houses of China's sun-and-wind village



China is no stranger to solar and wind energy, tidal and geothermal power and biogas.

"We have been researching and experimenting for years," said Xiong Shangyi, the chief engineer of the Peking Institute for Solar Energy.

This institute belongs to the group of seven Chinese universities and research centres which have collaborated with just as many German firms (AEG, for example) and institutes (the Jülich nuclear research centre, for example) to carry out experiments with regenerative sources of energy.

During the last five years experiments designed to provide sources of energy for rural areas have been conducted in a number of villages near Peking.

The village of Yihezhuan, 30 kilometres southwest of Peking, is the first village in China to be able to cater for its energy needs via solar energy, wind and bioenergy.

The new "solar village" as it will officially be called in future is the result of a joint German-Chinese project under the overall responsibility of the Ministry for Research and Technology in Bonn.

The DM10m development costs mean that this is the biggest project sponsored by this Ministry in China.

The solar village will be officially handed over in the next few weeks.

"We don't just want to turn it into a centre for China," Ji Yanshou, the vice-president of the Peking Commission for Technology pointed out, "but in collaboration with the United Nations into a key research centre for the Third World."

When the skies are overcast the model village with its roughly 140 farming households and 650 inhabitants looks like any other Chinese village.

Gleaming difference

But when the sun comes out the special storage panels and large glass facades of the farmhouses begin to glitter and gleam as solar energy begins to charge them up.

Approximately 70 passive solar houses in various forms form the basis for the concept of decentralised energy use, which primarily hopes to provide energy for the most remote Chinese provinces.

For about 20 per cent higher building costs than a normal farmhouse the solar houses can ensure an average indoor temperature of 12 degrees in winter and thus save 60 to 80 per cent of the usual coal costs.

The sun reflectors set up in the farmyards, which can bring five litres of water to the boil within twenty minutes, are more practical for general use.

Whereas up to now only about 200 solar houses have been built in China 80,000 sun reflectors, each costing between 60 and 80 yuan and manufactured by China itself, have been sold to farmers.

Sixty-thousand reflectors have been bought in the northwest province of Gansu alone, each reflector saving each family about one ton of firewood every year.

The variety of easily applicable technologies demonstrated in the village near Peking ranges from solar-heated boilers for showers to small or large-scale fermentation gas plants linked to a cattle farm and able to operate a ten kilowatt generator.

The water supply is regulated via a deep-well pump run by photoelectrical cells.

A decentralised telephone and radio network is operated via solar generators on the roof of the brigade building.

Other pilot installations in nearby villages make use of wind energy, run a TV converter on solar energy and are experimenting on a mobile drinking-water processing system run by solar energy.

China already has a number of similar albeit smaller experimental stations in Lanzhou (Gansu) and Kanton and in Mongolia.

Solar energy research and its application was referred to for the first time in the new Seventh Five Year Plan (1986-1990).

The European discussion on the use of alternative sources of energy, however, has little in common with the Chinese approach.

The expression "alternative energy" can only be used if there is more than one option.

The growing gap between the energy supply and China's expanding economy is a major problem for Chinese energy policy planners.

A major difficulty is how to supply energy to China's more remote provinces.

Regenerative sources of energy can only be regarded as a transitional solution in a country in which roughly 40 per cent of the rural population still has no electricity.

Since 1985 100 factories and 160 research institutes have been working on ways of using solar energy, which is in great demand from the more prosperous farmers.

In the outer provinces of northwest China up until Tibet there is between 2,600 and 3,000 hours of sunshine each year.

Favourable wind conditions have made Mongolia the central location for about 10,000 wind generators, which provide the pastoral people of this area with electricity.

The use of fermentation gas for cooking is to be extended to 20 million households by 1990.

The approximately nine million fermentation gas plants currently in operation, however, can only cater for 15 per cent of the modest household demand for fuels.

Influenced by the reactor accident in Chernobyl China has reiterated during recent weeks that it intends pursuing its energy policy programme.

This includes the accelerated construction of coal-fired and hydroelectric power plants and a safety-conscious nuclear energy programme.

China's first 300 megawatt pressurised water reactor is scheduled to become operational in 1989.

Alternative and decentralised sources of energy are viewed as complementary.

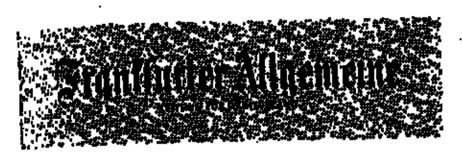
These will be more strongly influenced by the market than by energy policy planning programmes.

Johnny Erling

(Stuttgarter Zeitung, 15 July 1986)

EUROPEAN AVIATION

National interests hold out against deregulation bid



The spectre of deregulation is haunting several European airlines — the ones with the nice, comfortable cartel arrangements.

Transport ministers of the European Community have been meeting regularly to discuss liberalisation of the airways. But national barriers are so far holding out against the drive towards open competition.

The concept of deregulation first evolved in the United States where a civil aviation Deregulation Act was passed in 1978.

It laid down that fares and services were to be regulated by market forces and not public authorities — which meant, of course, competition. Safety provisions remained subject to official control.

The Civil Aviation Board, which had done the controlling, was disbanded in 1984. Since then it's been market-oriented flying.

Not everything the Americans do in aviation is worth following. Many people are worried by the concentration of business which has set in since deregulation.

The European Commission is negotiating with member governments to liberalise air traffic in Europe. The European Court of Justice recently decided that the provisions of the Treaty of Rome are also applicable to air traffic.

As the Court explained, however, this would rule out the current system.

At the moment respective national airlines negotiate their flight paths and air fares and then hope that the arrangement will be accepted by their governments.

If, for example, the German carrier, Lufthansa, wants to operate a service to Milan in Italy it has to grant the Italian airline company Alitalia the same rights in its air traffic between Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany.

At the same time the air fares are fixed.

The current system, therefore, is a network of legally safeguarded cartels.

Transport ministers of the European Community have been meeting regularly to dicuss liberalising the airways.

It is easy to understand why those groups which advocate a more liberal air traffic system in Europe are disappointed and annoyed at the resolutions adopted so far by the Council of Ministers.

Weak declarations of intent do not help.

If the Commission really wants greater liberalisation in the field of air traffic by 1992 more must be done to achieve it.

But how deregulated can and should air traffic be in Europe?

Can Europe permit the kind of deregulation practised in the United States?

The specifically European conditions must be taken into account.

The market covered by European air traffic within the European Community is smaller than the American market.

On average the flight distances are shorter.

Due to an extensive road and rail network in Europe these means of transport provide tougher competition to air traffic than is the case in the United States.

More important still, however, is the fact that most of the national airline companies operating in the countries of the European Community are publicly owned and have a different cost structure.

A truly free system of competition presupposes that only those companies survive on the market which have the best service, the most favourable prices and the highest degree of reliability.

No government in the European Community, however, is likely in future to announce that it is no longer worthwhile operating its own national airline because others are more efficient.

In all probability it would prefer to pour in endless streams of public subsidies to pull the company through.

The subsidisation policies of recent years for the steel industry have shown where this leads.

Wherever governments feel that it is necessary for reasons of national prestige or social policy considerations to keep inviable companies alive via subsidies they will continue to financially support these companies despite Community bans.

This is where a liberal air traffic policy finds itself confronted by national barriers.

Nevertheless, the Community governments and the Commission in Brussels should not give up the struggle.

Deregulation in the United States has opened up new frontiers for air traffic.

The first step for the Community governments should be to liberalise bilateral agreements.

The British airlines British Airways and British Caledonian together with the Dutch KLM have made most headway in this respect.

During recent years they have introduced greater flexibility to the granting of flight operation rights and the fixing of air fares for flights across the English Channel.

It is no coincidence that these two countries are the frontrunners with regard to efforts to liberalise air traffic.

Both countries have gone the furthest so far in attempts to privatise their national airlines.

Lufthansa is also gradually moving in this direction, and the French are reputed to have similar plans.

European air traffic policy must support and encourage such efforts.

The next step could be a transition from bilateral to multilateral agreements on flight routes and air fares.

Of course, some will say why bother with additional agreements. Isn't it better for each individual airline to fix its own air fares and be allowed to operate services to all airports?

Airline passengers provide the answer to this question.

They want to be able to at least have the opportunity of rebooking their flight with another airline or booking their outward flight with one company and their return flight with another and, finally, transferring from a flight with one company to one with another without too many problems.

Would-be reformers of the European air traffic system have plenty of scope for changes in the field of regional air traffic.

It is here that the national differences become most obvious.

In a "liberality ranking" Spain and Italy would be at the bottom end of the list and Britain and the Netherlands at the top.

Things have improved recently in the Federal Republic and the network of links between regional airports and major international airports have intensified.

A sound transport policy is needed to speed up this process.

Shuttle and connecting services should be made available by all airline companies without extra charge.

Helmut Uebbing

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 16 July 1986)

Asylum flood

Continued from page 4

lum applicants and creating considerable difficulties for the divided city the East hopes to succeed in forcing the three Western protecting powers to introduce regular border checks at the Wall.

It also hopes America, Britain and France will modify in the divided city the Federal Republic's right of asylum and aliens' law, which apply as a matter of course in West Berlin.

The East German Foreign Ministry has accordingly announced that a decision on asylum applicants in West Berlin must be reached by those who, for well-known reasons, were entitled to arrive at them.

So the German Democratic Republic is unlikely to change its mind on the approach it has adopted to applicants for asylum in West Berlin merely because Bonn says it is in breach of international custom and an increasingly intolerable burden on intra-German ties.

In the present circumstances attempts to sweeten East Germany and the Soviet Union by offering to pay compensation in return for a satisfactory arrangement seem doomed to failure.

It is time the Bonn government made a direct approach to the Soviet Union as the power really responsible. Foreign Minister Genscher had an opportunity of doing so on his visit to Moscow.

It is high time the Western Allies as protecting powers in Berlin acted too. They can no longer afford to look on idly while the fourth Allied power, the Soviet Union, rules the roost.

Peter Jochen Winters

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 18 July 1986)

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nology Ministry has invested roughly DM30bn in it. A paltry DM2bn has been invested in solar research.

Chernobyl has been beneficial in at least one respect, the Stuttgart scientists say. Solar energy research and development have been stepped up as a result of the fallout shock.

A drawback of the Soviet reactor catastrophe as they see it is the emotionalisation of energy issues and what Professor Bloss calls their "superficial politicisation."

This politicisation has made their research subject a state assembly election campaign issue, for instance. "What we need in research policy," he says, "is continuity, not a brush fire."

Wolfgang Kunath

(Stuttgarter Zeitung, 21 June 1986)

■ EXHIBITIONS

Scooped, threshed, poured, kneaded, dyed, sprayed

DIE WELT

Paper is known to have been first invented in China nearly 2,000 years ago, but it may have been known much earlier in Thailand.

The Arabs certainly learnt about it from Chinese prisoners taken at the battle of Samarkand in about 750 AD. In the 12th century they passed on what they knew to Europe, first to the Sicilians, then to the Spaniards.

The first paper mill that is definitely known to have existed in Germany was run by Ulman Stromer in Nuremberg in about 1390.

Encouraged by the invention of book printing, over 200 mills were set up in Germany over the next century, many near Düren, where the paper industry is still a mainstay of the economy.

Düren as the "paper city" feels obliged to keep the tradition alive in its civic consciousness. The municipal Leopold-Hoesch-Museum has bridged the gap yet to be filled by a long-projected German Paper Museum.

Under the heading "Paper" it joined forces with paper manufacturers five years ago in holding an exhibition dealing in full with the "history, manufacture and artistic design" of paper.

This initial exhibition, which was highly regarded, led to plans for an International Biennale of Paper Art at the Leopold-Hoesch-Museum.

The 1981 exhibition featured art work with paper in general, whereas the first biennale concentrates on the hand-made.

So all exhibits are hand-made artistic creations — by 140 artists from 22 countries ranging from Egypt and Australia to Taiwan, South Africa and Brazil — and including 23 West Germans.

Anyone who has seen how a sheet of paper is made, and the exhibition presents an opportunity of doing so, will readily appreciate what the term "hand-made deckle-edged paper" means.

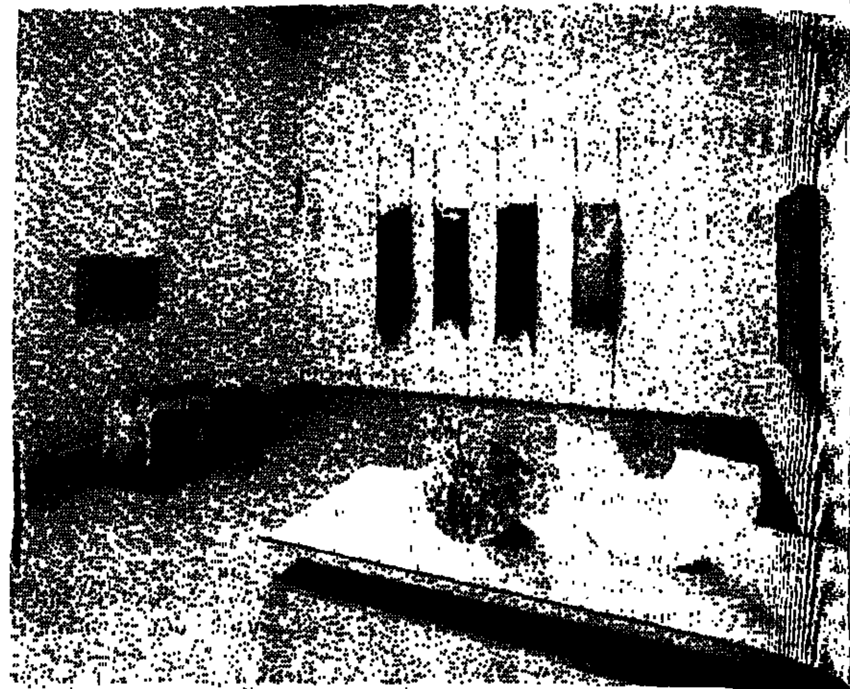
He will realise how the irregular deckle edge comes about and how the watermark, vertical and horizontal lines originated.

The Düren exhibition also shows paper mash to be a shapable mass like clay, plaster or bronze that provides an imaginative artist with any number of creative possibilities.

It is no coincidence that the United States is represented by the largest group of artists: exhibits by 40 artists.

They include pioneers of paper art who in the 1950s and 1960s discovered pulp as an artistic material in its own right and made it interesting.

The international jury considered entries by over 500 artists.



Paper art: exhibits, from left, by Warja Lavater (Switzerland), Heinz-Dieter Pietsch (England) and Sian Lloyd (England). (Photo: ...)

Douglas Morse Howell, now 80, is the grand old man of paper art. His pupils hail from various artistic disciplines such as painting, sculpture, printing and textiles and, last but not least, ceramics, with which paper art has many parallels.

They extend from the way the material is manufactured to the barely identifiable, flowing transitions from art to craft and back.

Just as ambitious ceramic artists in Japan or, say, Lotte Reimers in Germany make their clay from special soil, stones, rice straw, plant ash, grass and feldspar, adding all manner of extras, paper artists ring the changes too.

Paper-making can from its outset be said to have been the most successful and momentous recycling technique ever, transforming rags and waste of all kind into a versatile working material.

Modern artists fashion their pulp from rag, jute, silk, bark, straw, plants, felt, waste paper, cellulose and much, much more.

They add all manner of ingredients, such as clay, soil, coffee grounds, hemp, flowers, pine cones, thistles, kernels, sticks of wood, quills, wire, gold, ferrous oxide and even, in Fred Siegenthaler's case, beads of glass.

This mass is then scooped, smashed, threshed, poured, kneaded, marked, dyed, sprayed, coloured, printed, folded and sculptured.

Anything is possible. What, in wool, is dyed in the wool is, where paper is concerned, dyed in the pulp or mash and can be combined in various shapes and strips, density and consistency, and by mosaic or layer.

It can be expanded to form room-filling installations, depending on the artistic origins of the maker. Two- and three-dimensional work can be seen that resembles informal paintings, reliefs and sculpture.

Figurative work with a bearing on reality and committed to a New Realism can be seen, as can other work with pop art or constructive tendencies. The interface between paper art and art in general is unmistakable.

Yet paper art's possibilities of expression at times seem more subtle, varied and strikingly meaningful.

Chava Pressburger from Israel, for instance, has on show a Dark Landscape of paper made from local plants.

Marnie Burns from Canada exhibits a jacket recycled from itself, as it were.

David Hockney's love of swimming pools is well known from his paintings. In Düren he presents effective variations on his favourite motif using dyed

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500 plundered works on loan from Vatican

Over 500 books and manuscripts on loan from the Vatican are on show at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Heidelberg.

They come from the 8,000 volumes of the Palatine Library, which in its day was the most famous in Germany.

Until 1622 it was housed in the building where the exhibition is taking place. It was the university library.

The Bibliotheca Palatina was plundered and taken to Rome by Catholic troops during the Thirty Years' War.

The exhibition of books from the collection built up by the electoral princes of the Palatinate centuries ago is being held in honour of Heidelberg University's 600th anniversary and is considered a unique event.

Baden-Württemberg Premier Lothar Späth, said the exhibition should be taken as a reminder not to neglect care of culture, which was no less important than, say, high tech.

Today's democratic state was duty bound to maintain the cultural heritage for future generations and Baden-Württemberg has set up a cultural heritage foundation and launched a restoration programme.

The Vatican has not permitted loans from its library for about 400 years, exceptions being made solely with the express approval of the Pope.

Never before has such a major part of a section of the Vatican Library been released on loan.

This exception was made, according to Cardinal Stickler of the Vatican Library, because of the importance of the Palatine Library for Heidelberg University.

The exhibition features a cross-section of prints from the Renaissance, the humanist era and the Reformation.

They include the Lorsch Gospels from Charlemagne's court school, the 10th century Byzantine roll of Joshua and Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II's falconry manual.

The irreplaceable originals were flown to Heidelberg on board a Bundeswehr transport plane. They will be on show with special security precautions until November.

(Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin, 9 July 1986)

■ THE CINEMA

On board the Zyklon B gravy train

WESTDEUTSCHE ALLGEMEINE

Unlike *Heimat*, in which Edgar Reitz reflected nearly a century of German history in the lives of ordinary people, Bernhard Sinkel's *Väter und Söhne* (Fathers and Sons) concentrates on the German upper middle class between 1911 and 1947.

Sinkel's eight-hour epic, which is to be serialised on TV in four episodes at peak viewing time in November, was premiered on the wide screen at the Munich film festival.

Väter und Söhne is the tale of the guilty involvement of the Deutz family, leading industrialists, in the darkest chapter of German history between 1933 and 1945.

Geheimrat Deutz, played by Burt Lancaster, rules his family and factory with an iron hand.

In the opening scene we see him in the laboratory explaining the more salient points of chemistry to his grandson Georg. "If you have the formula," he says, "you have the power."

On the outbreak of war in 1914 his son Ulrich volunteers for military service and is killed in action while brother Friedrich organises experiments with laboratory animals to manufacture poison gas.

Messrs Deutz progress from poison gas manufacture to mass production of saltpetre, making the company, now managed by new strong man Heinrich Beck, a crucial contractor to the armed forces.

The company expands and joins IG Farben, a move to which the *Geheimrat* is staunchly opposed.

In the Third Reich IG Farben goes on to become the largest chemicals group in the world.

But Friedrich uses blackmail and intrigue to bring about the merger of companies previously loosely associated in IG Farben. The *Geheimrat* is sent into retirement.

Grandson Georg, played by Herbert Grönemeyer, is no chip off the old block; he wants to work in the theatre and becomes a leading Ufa film director on the strength of his grandfather's connections.

After a ding-dong quarrel with Georg the *Geheimrat* dies of a heart attack.

During the Third Reich Friedrich and Heinrich are increasingly involved and implicated in the Holocaust.

As manufacturers of Zyklon B, the gas used in concentration camp gas chambers, the family are effectively associated with the annihilation of German Jews, but they prefer to turn a blind eye (both during and after the war) to their personal responsibility.

But Nazi careerist Sokolowski is no less keen to board the gravy train than he is to outrival Max Bernheim, played by Hannes Jenicke, for the hand of Elli, played by Katharina Thalbach.

Sokolowski is the only member of the family to see the lie of the land and change his tune when he is arrested at the end of the war. Before long he is a prosecution witness at the Nuremberg war crimes tribunal.

At Nuremberg sons Max and Edmund are in the dock. They too have realised their position and resolved to shoulder their burdensome legacy.

"The truth is that we have been guilty. That is why I must say all I know." Edmund Beck tells his father.

Sinkel's film is a wide-ranging epic with fine camerawork and well produced.

At a quiet pace it unfolds both the course of an era and the portrait of a class that is now past history.

A problem he faced was that of having to link historic facts and a large number of historic personalities in their public and private lives, which meant he had to make do with a fairly indirect treatment.

But he outlines his characters so lovingly that this soon proves no difficulty.

Bruno Ganz is outstanding as Heinrich Beck. So are Burt Lancaster as the *Geheimrat* and Julie Christie as his daughter-in-law.

Andreas Kohl

(Westdeutsche Allgemeine, Essen, 30 June 1986)



Between scenes on location in *Väter und Söhne*: from left Bruno Ganz, Julie Christie, and Burt Lancaster. (Photo: amw)

Irina Brook as Mashenka ... more than a love story. (Photo: Concorde-Film)

A Berlin boarding house full of post-revolution Russian émigrés

Mashenka, John Goldschmidt's major European co-production based on the novel by Vladimir Nabokov, was one of the few full-length cinema films to be shot in Berlin in the first half of 1986.

Otherwise there hasn't been much: the occasional TV production and very little cinema.

Mashenka was shot in Berlin and Finland. Helsinki, the Finnish capital, has more than once deputised for Russia when location work in Moscow or Leningrad was impossible.

The film was made on a generous DM8m budget and is bankrolled by ZDF, Channel Two of German TV, and Concorde, the distributors, in the Federal Republic, Channel 4 and Artificial Eye in Britain and FR 3 France Région and Mondex in France.

Director John Goldschmidt does not share the fears of those who see such large-scale European productions as a faceless mash in which the characteristic features of national productions inevitably fall by the wayside.

What he hopes is that the co-production will enable him to compete seriously with the Americans in the European market with a film culture of his own that doesn't need to keep an anxious eye on the other side of the Atlantic and to cast, say, Madonna as the female lead.

Mashenka was Nabokov's first novel, set among Russian émigrés in a Berlin boarding-house in the 1920s.

The hero Ganin, a smart young Russian who spends his time between boredom and alienation, sounds an autobiographical note.

Nabokov, who was born in Petersburg in 1899, escaped to England in 1919, preferring to study in Britain rather than endure the Russian Revolution.

From 1923 to 1937 he spent most of his time in Berlin, a city he never, incidentally, really came to like. He then moved to Paris before migrating to the United States in 1940, where he became a professor of Russian literature eight years later.

Ganin, played by Cary Elwes, has a drab little love affair with a German girl. One day he discovers that the most unpleasant next-door lodger, Alfyrov, has married his first love, Mashenka, who is to arrive in Berlin in a few days' time.

This brief interlude is for Ganin a voyage of memory to the Russia he loves, to his harmonious youth and his four-day love affair with Mashenka, played by Irina Brook, Peter Brook's daughter.

The evening before she arrives a party is held at the boarding-house. It is held to mark a firm engagement for Alec and Colin, two dancers, the departure of Ganin and the ageing poet Podtyagin and another lodger's 20th birthday.

Ganin succeeds in animating Alfyrov to drink so heavily that he is unable to collect Mashenka at the station the next morning.

Ganin meets her instead, but the meeting takes a totally unexpected turn.

Director Goldschmidt is not unfamiliar with what it is like to have to leave one's home. He grew up in Vienna and escaped to London with his family during the Third Reich.

So *Mashenka*, with smaller parts played by Lena Stolze, Eva Lissa, Sunny Melles, Jean-Claude Brialy and others, is for Goldschmidt more than a romantic love story.

"I have tried," he says, "to set the film in the right historic background. It starts during the Russian Revolution, then takes place in Berlin with constant flashbacks.

"I don't think we have departed too far from the novel. We have merely set the story in another framework designed to make it more comprehensible to contemporary audiences and to make it better film material.

"When the book was written everyone knew about the Russian Revolution and that there were 250,000 Russian émigrés in Berlin. That means nothing to British or American audiences today. But I wouldn't say the film was hostile toward the Soviet Union in any way.

"I also wanted to set the film up as a kind of road movie, as an external journey from Russia to France via Berlin and at the same time as an internal journey back to the characters' pasts, a journey in the opposite direction."

Goldschmidt has reworked the original script, written by British playwright John Mortimer, with this aim in view.

He was guided by classic, simple scripts that "manage without tricks and toys yet still achieve great emotional intensity."

Two points about Berlin came as a surprise to him: One was that the Berlin of 1924 is virtually impossible to portray today, the other was "what good people there are here to work with. I am simply incredibly happy because we have such a good team here."

Angelika Kaps

(Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin, 29 June 1986)

Continued from page 10

and pressed pulp: Winifred Ann Lutz from America works with paper and light like glass painters, as does Andreas von Weizsäcker from Germany.

The drawing takes shape during paper-making in much the same way as differences in transparency.

Warja Lavater from Switzerland, one of the first artists to work wet paper mash with her fingers, fashioning bas-relief paper surfaces in which elevations and depressions, transparent and opaque parts form a wide range of variations.

Martin Weimar from Ulm, who trained as a market gardener and florist, has felt-bound king-sized books of hand-made paper on show. The lines are watermarks between which he has sown seeds of various kinds of grass, creating the impression of script.

The museum has them on show outside a window through which they can be seen growing in the daylight and natural humidity.

They have already turned green as intended. May the Düren Biennale flourish no less visibly.

Eo Plunien

(Die Welt, Bonn, 2 July 1986)

■ NUTRITION

Mr Potato, 80, says Selma is the tastiest piece

STUTTGARTER ZEITUNG

When he was a young man, Hans Siebeneick jilted a girlfriend because she did not know the difference between a potato tuber and an asparagus tuber.

The gap in the young woman's knowledge was unforgiveable for the man who has spent his entire life investigating (and eating) the humble spud.

Siebeneick, now 80, is a world authority on the subject. He has more than 100 books about it, including his own *Weltkartoffelatlas* (World Potato Atlas) published in 1955.

He became interested in potatoes as a small child in the garden of his parents' house in Möbisburg, near Erfurt.

Even then he was convinced that it was one of the most valuable and nutritious vegetables available. And so it was in this garden that his first attempts to cultivate it took place.

He hasn't changed his mind about the potato's value. The bookshelves of his house in Düren are full of the results of his studies into the potato tuber over the past 50 years.

Siebeneick is a doctor of natural sciences. His book has become a standard work and has been translated into French, English, Italian, Spanish, Hungarian and Dutch. It describes more than 1,200 species of potato.

Siebeneick's private notes cover more than 20,000 types of potato with such sonorous names as "Harvest Thanksgiving," "Giant," "The Seagull," "Ladies' Fingers," "Tiger" or "White Knight."

It takes between eight to 10 years to develop a species of potato to the point that it can be approved by the national seed-control office for cultivation in this country. This means that only one out of 300,000 seedlings is likely to be approved.

Is this a great song and dance about such an ordinary matter? Hans Siebeneick takes up this point instantly.

Producing different varieties of potato is no song and dance about nothing, he says.

"The potato is a basic foodstuff for the whole population," he points out. He does not tire of emphasising this in political, economic and scientific circles.

Just like 70 per cent of the population as a whole the Siebeneick family has potatoes every day with their meals, mainly the variety that Siebeneick favours most, "Selma."

His family eats far more than the average 85 kilograms of potatoes annually per head of population. This figure was provided by the Federal Statistics Office in Wiesbaden for 1981.

Hans Siebeneick is not only a serious natural scientist, but is prepared to use his scientific knowledge for domestic purposes. His wife Franzis lets him cook his potatoes in her kitchen, although she does not share his potato-mania.

When he is boiling potatoes in the special saucepan he has developed in which he can boil eight different varieties of potato at a time, she does not intefere.

Among his many interests he is a local politician, judge and a member of the Düren prison committee.

But the constant star in his life is, was and always will be the potato. His wife now knows enough about the scientific side of the potato to be able to talk shop about the tuber.

She prefers the more down-to-earth side of his potato studies, potatoe salad, for instance. This opens up a gap between man and wife, because Franzis has a quite different approach to the potato to husband Hans.

The results of their friendly family rivalry appear side by side, printed in the magazine specialising in potatoes, *Die Kartoffelwirtschaft*.

Hans Siebeneick met his wife in Münster when he was a *Landrat*, head of the administration in a Landkreis. He had been disappointed in another, very nice girl he had known whom he liked very much, but she was hopelessly ignorant about potatoes.

He said: "She could not tell the difference between a potato and an asparagus tuber." This was for him sacrilege. So the friendship came to nothing.

He has had a full life. His ambitions would be totally fulfilled if consumers knew more about the potato to which he has devoted his whole life.

People are not particularly worried about having a different variety of potato each day with meals — today the Irmgard variety, tomorrow Petra and the day after the robust Carmen variety.

A lot would be achieved if the German housewife prepared the three most popular varieties of potato in this country, "Hansa," "Grata" and "Sieglinde" with due regard to scientific knowledge.

This means not leaving potatoes in water for longer than 15 minutes, because if they are in the water longer their taste is altered.

It is best to boil potatoes in just a little water. In this way they retain 90 per cent of their vitamins. Boiling them for too long reduces their vitamin-content to 58 per cent.

Boiling potatoes well has been the practice for a long time. Frederick the Great recommended to his subjects that potatoes should be well boiled.

The potato has been known in this country since 1600, but for a long time it was only well-known as a flower.

When you look at him, and unless you know him, you would not think for a moment that he was scientifically committed to the potato.

At 80 he is as thin as a rake. His figure and agility do not tally with the popular view of the effects of eating potatoes.

He said: "It's just prejudice. Potatoes don't make you fat. It's the sauces served with them."

If potatoes are eaten in moderation they keep you slim, for 100 grams of potato contain only 70 calories.

Hans Siebeneick's five children bear this out. For years they have had to eat the potato soup their father has prepared for them and they have not grown fat as a result.

His research is never undertaken in the laboratory. At the best times there are 800 different varieties of potato growing in his garden close to the Hürtgen Forest.

Among these are exotic varieties such as potatoes with blue and red tissue. He acquired seed potatoes of these varieties from friends abroad and via German embassies.

As he is the only independent scientific horticulturalist dealing with the potato and he cannot afford staff, his family has to help out.

Mr Potato at home (Photo: Wiedemann)

He pursues his studies at the luncheon table. His five children are sometimes fed up to the teeth with potatoes, particularly if before breakfast they have to dig some up, count the eyes in the potato and taste ten different varieties.

But they also have fun being their father's assistants.

With a twinkle in his eye he says he does not get upset when his friends occasionally say to him that he is telling tale stories.

He would not be a potato fan if he were not convinced that the potato tuber is an important blessing for mankind, and not only because it feeds people.

He said: "A glass of potato juice a day keeps you young and healthy." It regulates the circulation and helps the stomach to function properly.

"Just look at me," he said. "I've no time to get old." He has been honoured with the Order of the Federal Republic for scientific studies on the potato.

Renate Wiedemann

(Stuttgarter Zeitung, 12 July 1986)

Views clash on nature of food allergies

Some people say food-related allergies are increasing and that foods are causing illness. Others say the number of genuine food allergies is exaggerated.

Allergies, pseudo-allergies and intolerances are all too lightly lumped together, delegates heard at a meeting of the West German nutrition society's conference in Würzburg, chaired by Professor Heinrich Kasper of the Würzburg university clinic.

Because there is a lack of reliable statistics, scientists have to fall back on estimates.

At the most two per cent of the population in this country has a genuine allergy to a food.

The most common food allergy is to cow's milk. One per cent of babies and small children and 0.5 per cent of adults are affected.

Common allergies are: to chicken, meat, cheese, fish and shell fish. People can also be allergic to vegetable protein in vegetables, fruit (strawberries and gooseberries), bananas, tomatoes, groundnuts, soya products, nuts, chocolate and cereals.

Vegetable allergies are frequently related to pollen allergies as well.

Although allergies affecting human beings have been known for centuries, only recently have they been looked at closely.

Antigen in the body's immunity system can trigger off a chain reaction. This can include releasing carrier hormones such as histamines, prostaglandines and leukotriene, and stimulate certain blood cells, anti-bodies, to combine.

The resultant antigen-anti-body reaction appears on the skin and in the mucous membrane of the body, causing nettle-rash fever, eczema, asthmatic attacks, diarrhoea and vomiting.

Allergies occur mainly after eating raw foodstuffs, less frequently when cooked, baked, fried or grilled food is eaten.

It has also been observed that allergies do not remain with a person for life: Fifty per cent of the babies who have an allergy to cow's milk lose it by the time they are 12.

Professor Ulrich Wahn of the university clinic in West Berlin recommends breast-feeding or feeding with soyo milk or watered-down milk up to six months after birth so as to avoid the cow's milk allergy.

There is no question of harm to the bodily organs if foodstuffs that cause allergies are avoided.

Unlike genuine foodstuffs allergies, pseudo-allergies do not activate a reaction in the body's immunity system.

They appear less frequently as a malfunction of the gastro-intestinal canal, but cause asthmatic attacks, nettle fever rash and eczema.

These pseudo-allergies are caused by additives to foodstuffs such as colouring matter and food preservatives.

Fruit, vegetables, herbs and spices can also cause pseudo-allergies.

A third group involves intolerance. These can appear after eating foodstuffs that have a considerable histamine content such as cheese and wine.

A lack of digestive enzymes can cause a milk-sugar-fructose intolerance.

The skin is the part of the body most susceptible to genuine as well as pseudo-allergies.

Dr Gabriele Bäuerle of the Erlangen university clinic said that family history could often give clues concerning allergies.

Children whose parents are known to have allergies are particularly threatened.

On the other hand only five to 10 per cent of patients with nettle rash fever have a pre-history of this.

Nettle rash fever is caused by the release of histamine from colouring agents and preservatives in foodstuffs.

Visculitis allergies are rare, but care should be taken with quinine additives in drinks.

Nickel and nickel-rich foodstuffs can cause eczema blisters on the hands. If a person is sensitive to sugar-additives then ecezma can appear on the face and hands if exposed to light.

Skin tests show that if foodstuffs that cause allergies are excluded from the diet there is less likelihood of getting ill.

Professor Kasper said that it was difficult for doctors in cases of intestinal inflammation to conclude that it was caused by an allergy to a certain type of food and to exclude other causes.

Diagnosis is easier if other specialists are called in.

Lotte Ludwig

(Die Welt, Bonn, 8 July 1986)

■ ACHIEVEMENTS

Nuclear energy emerges with not quite a bang as Nobel laureates meet

There are no flags or bunting, no banners in the streets of Lindau to welcome the Nobel laureates for their annual gathering. The town takes more measured notice of its illustrious guests.

The mayor welcomes them in an opening speech and their presence is reflected in booksellers' windows in the narrow streets of the mediaeval city overlooking Lake Constance.

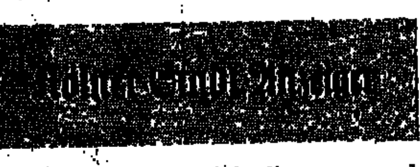
There are clothbound reviews of the past 35 Lindau conferences and biographies and descriptions of individual Nobel laureates' work.

This year for the first time, scientific titles featured in booksellers' windows concentrated on atomic energy — a natural consequence of Chernobyl and popular worries about science and what it stands for.

In the Inselhalle, the conference venue, this special interest was either ignored or rejected.

Christian Anfinsen, 1972 Nobel chemistry laureate, misled an audience of over 500 students and young scientists from 25 countries by prefacing his lecture with the comment that he had changed his topic and planned first to spend half an hour dealing with atomic energy and human rights.

He was given a standing ovation and commented that it certainly sounded as though his audience might prefer the change of subject. But he went straight



into his lecture as originally announced: on chemistry, of course.

Day-to-day political disputes are not part of the concept on which the Lindau gatherings are based.

The governing body that has prepared the conferences since 1951 has always left it entirely to the laureates themselves to decide how far they planned to break the harmonious bounds of a social event.

Calls for greater conflict readiness voiced outside the official purview have met with outraged rejection in the past and did so this year too.

Nobel laureates refused, as specialists, to generalise — even though, as a press conference questioner put it, the credibility of science had suffered substantially of late.

To judge the Lindau conferences solely by their conflict readiness would hardly be to do them justice. They were launched in 1951 as a successful bid to free German scientists from their post-war isolation.

They have since been a family affair for the scientific elite, who met and conferred and, in recent years, for exchanges between leading scientists and young students and research fellows who are able to gain motivation for their further scientific work in conversation with their elders.

The crux of the four-day scientific round of talks consists of two afternoons of debate between students and laureates and the four mornings in full session during which any Nobel laureate in attendance can speak on any subject he wishes, including atomic energy for instance.

This year's main topic, given that after medics and physicists the choice was now that of the chemists and economists, was research into the structure of organic substances by means of X-ray crystallography.

Laureates sought to motivate young audiences in various ways, depending on their personality and temperament.

"Let no-one tell you Nobel laureates are the Olympic gods of science," said Max Perutz, who won the 1962 Nobel chemistry prize for his work on haemoglobin.

"There are many scientists who are just as good as we are," he coyly but rightly added.

Perutz was perhaps the first speaker not only to brilliantly deal with his topic but to convey a sense of fascination.

The Vienna-born chemist, now 72, has lived and worked in Cambridge, England, for half a century. He outlined latest developments in haemoglobin research.

So much is now known about the shape and working of the complex molecular chain of the red blood corpuscle that he was able, with international assistance, to make a film showing at Lindau a computer simulation of the interior of haemoglobin.

He and others have tried to make their research findings benefit medicine. The development of new medicines is still largely a game of chance. Tens of thousands of substances need to be synthesised to make up a new medicine.

On average it costs $60m and takes 10 years for a new drug to scale all the safety hurdles and gain access to the market.

But if you know the structure of a medicine and the shape of its molecules (and where they are to accumulate in the patient's body) they can be systematically synthesised.

That is why X-ray crystallography plays such a major role in organic chemistry.

An X-ray undergoes a characteristic change whenever it passes through a molecule. A photograph of the X-ray reveals in principle all that needs to be known about the molecule and its structure.

Fifty thousand different molecules have already been photographed from within, as it were, in this way.

In his film Perutz featured attempts to discover a medicine to treat a form of anaemia widespread among black Africans and Americans in which the red blood corpuscles come to resemble sickles in shape.

Sickle cell anaemia is a hereditary disease that leads to painful and usually fatal heart attacks in childhood.

A minute mutation of haemoglobin is to blame. The film showed how various drugs were fed to the nooks and crannies of the haemoglobin molecule to prevent it from forming the telltale sickle-shaped chains.

Several drugs have been identified but also, as Perutz showed, demonstrate the limits of stereochemistry. For a variety of reasons none are suitable for use as medicine.

Medicine and chemistry overlapped in several lectures. Christian Anfinsen for instance dealt with new protein chemistry procedures to produce polypeptides, the building blocks of which proteins consist, more effectively.

He and others have shown that polypeptides isolated from a protein can "remember" the form and function they *had in it.*

If they could be manufactured artificially and incorporated in other molecules very effective vaccines might well result.

Disciplines rotate at Lindau. Medical research holds pride of place one year, followed by physics the next and chemistry the year after.

Chemistry shares its slot with economics, and 1978 laureate Herbert Simon from Pittsburgh was one of the leading economists at Lindau this year.

He felt one of the most important tasks of economics was to establish how man, with his limited computational ability, behaves.

The classical social theories favoured by economists were such stark abstractions they had proved empirically mistaken.

So his address was an impassioned appeal to fellow-economists to make greater use of empirical methods and techniques and to devise new theories on the basis of decisions reached by individual people."

Simon is banking on computers being able to simulate decision-making processes by means of artificial intelligence.

The gathering ended with a fundamental dispute on the laws of nature as such.

Ilya Prigogin, 1977 chemistry laureate and an imaginative wanderer between the worlds of physics and chemistry, has concentrated on research into irreversible natural processes and on the ability of matter to create order out of chaos in the process.

Prigogin sees the entire universe as in the throes of some such irreversible process that physicists can but inadequately described by means of natural laws that as a rule remain valid when time is run in reverse, as it were.

There are, he says, other possibilities, bearing in mind that we live in an evolutionary universe.

Rainer Klüting

(Stuttgarter Zeitung, 5 July 1986)

Piano playing link with left side of brain

Oldenburg musicologist Herbert Wiedemann has been awarded the 1985 Gerhard Wahsmann Prize for his work on the connection between piano playing and brain development.

His research found that piano lessons almost only train the left-hand side of the brain.

Recent brain research has shown the left-hand side of the brain to process mainly linguistic and symbolic patterns, whereas the right-hand side is more responsible for the development of artistic abilities.

The means of involving the right-hand side of the brain as well during piano playing could be such elementary activities as listening and repetition. Free improvisation might be a third factor.

dpa

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 4 July 1986)

■ FRONTIERS

Bid to find out if you can tell a criminal by his living room



The city of Karlsruhe has begun a project aimed at establishing if communal planning can help prevent crime. Police statistics will be used in conjunction with findings by Karlruhe University social scientists.

Police are each day compiling a selection of statistics including where offenders live. The scientists are analysing behaviour and population structures in five selected areas of the city — the types of buildings people live in, what proportion of the tenants are foreign and how much they earn, for example.

After three years the information is to be collated and assessed.

Franz Burkhart, head of the city's criminal investigation department, hopes that within the next few months, enough information will have been collected to form the basis for proposals to ministries for long-term crime prevention.

Already city administration officials know enough to be able to advise on how the city can be made safer. For example, parks and gardens department workers have been told that high bushes are not good because they can be used by exhibitionists as pre-strike bolt holes.

Influences

Rainer Duss is a member of the town planning staff. He expects the project to *yield information linking certain types* of buildings to crime, and also what influence factors such as income, education and unemployment exert.

In the past 10 years, theft has risen 86 per cent in Karlsruhe. Many of the offenders are young. Burkhart says the gap between the haves and the have nots is getting bigger. Young people like to impress with status symbols like a super bicycle costing a thousand marks, for instance. Once, the young used to steal the neighbour's cherries. Today it is the neighbour's car.

The project intends to establish the social background of offenders, look at the standard of their homes, make deductions and take action.

There are some isolated examples where direct remedial action has achieved results. One is in Saarbrücken, where the amount of crime in a certain area dropped sharply after a suburban youth centre was built.

In Karlsruhe, moped riders now have a place to meet where they won't upset local residents. The project is seen as a way of killing two birds with one stone: helping young people and at the same time keeping a closer eye on them.

The problem of street crime will be looked at: in Frankfurt, where street crime rose by a third last year, the size of the force on the beat in the central area has been increased to 60. Karlsruhe has only four in its central area. Last year there were 48 muggings in the area.

But property thefts are top of the league. Most occur where there are concentrations of people. Burglaries of cellars in residential areas is one example. Police say favoured targets are municipal residential buildings because of the lack of security.

Duss wants better prevention measures. One is the elimination of the popular wooden-slat cellar doors with something stronger. There should also be some thought given to how occupiers could be *given incentives to take greater* interest in security.

It was also important that residential areas were laid out so they could be better watched. Statistics showed that endangered areas were older areas with a high proportion of foreigners; and high-rise areas built in the 1960s.

In contrast, the safest areas were those with a lot of one-family houses. One of the control districts, Neureuth, was such an area. It had the lowest incidence of crime in the entire city.

Edwin Kube, a specialist who studies the relationship between town planning, architecture and crime, wants a comprehensive programme of prevention. He referred to the United States where neighbours are the most important means of fighting crime.

Uwe Erhardt, a crime prevention officer, agrees. He recommends the example of older people who enlist the help of relatives or neighbours when they have to carry any significant amount of money.

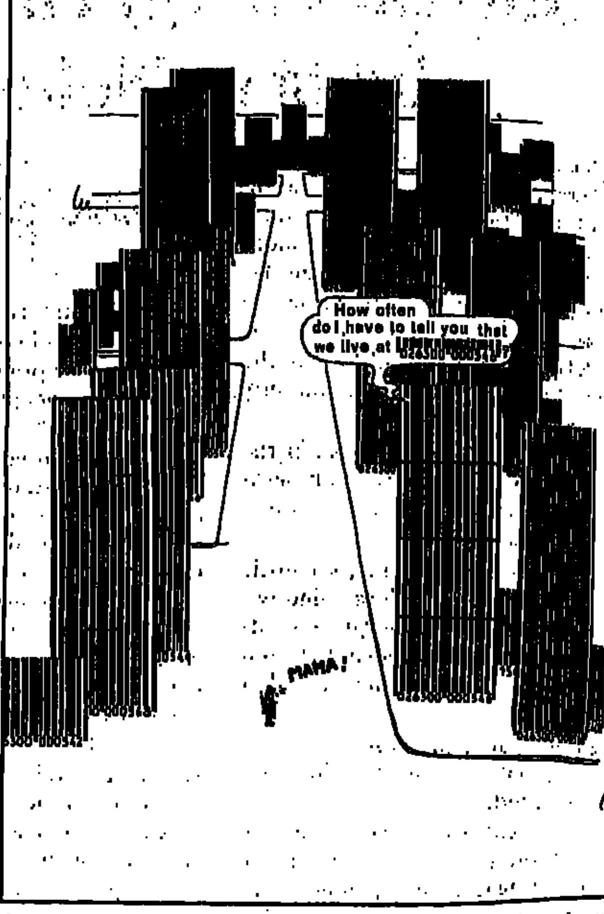
However, this suggestion does not get *at the problem of how closer relations* between neighbours can be created. People in tower blocks tend to be isolated. Feelings of neighbourliness are built up through trust. Trust is built up when people see each other often. That doesn't happen in tower blocks.

Another factor which mitigates against good neighbourhood relations is the much-vaunted mobility of modern life. This is hardly designed for helping people to get to know one another.

There are many examples where city involvement could be better used. Drugs is one.

Police chief Burkhart knows that drugs are not just a preserve of the cities. They are also a problem in small, rural villages.

In Frankfurt, a stronger police presence is supposed to help get junkies off the stuff and fight the dealers. But Burkhart thinks the issue is a social one and not basically one for either the police or town planners. The Karlsruhe project is costing 60,000 marks a year. The city itself, the Baden-Württemberg Interior Ministry and the *Land* criminal investigation department are all contributing. The research however, tends to give priority to crime frequency. The most common crimes, however, are not always those which people fear. So there is an emotional element which perhaps should be more taken into account. For instance, most people have a greater fear of being assaulted than of having their car radio stolen. Yet car radio thefts are much more common.



Cartoonist Erik Liebermann has a nightmare about city that can be read by scanner

(Cartoon: Liebermann/Frankfurter Allgemeine Z.)

So it would be a good idea for the project to make it clear which crimes people really ought to be concerned *about on statistical* grounds.

Rape is an example of a crime that frightens, yet which is statistically not all that common as public discussion might suggest.

In the last three years, all crime has increased nearly 400 per cent while rape has increased by 50 per cent. In 1983 there were a total of 6763 reported rapes across the nation (no one, of course, knows what the true figure is). But sex crimes comprise only one per cent of all crimes reported to the police.

Much more common is sexual abuse of children and exhibitionist behaviour. Other crimes such as "violence in the family" are barely represented in the statistics. Prevention work along traditional lines is hardly involved at all here.

Kube says a new comprehensive approach based on socially valid methods should be worked out.

Experiments such as *night taxis* women can do little *more than* sh[ow] that people are interested in tackling problems — they *don't do much* good in the long term.

In Bielefeld, a trial night-taxi project swallowed the allocated 200,000 marks within 17 days.

In Karlsruhe, where only two of the 20 reported rapes in the last half year were on the streets, the night-taxi idea is not regarded as the right approach.

In any case, crime prevention officer Erhardt says there are limits to what can be done to prevent rape.

Still, women remain afraid and recommendations by Burkhart make it clear how careful they should be. They should not go walking alone at night; when they go jogging, they should not wear sexually provocative clothing and they should be careful where they jog.

He says women should [illegible] be careful among friends [illegible] because almost all rapes were in houses. Both victims and offenders tend to know one another.

[illegible] buildings are not unsafer than the streets. But women still feel unsafe there, surveys reveal.

The city of Aachen has already set aside some levels in a selection of parking buildings exclusively for women.

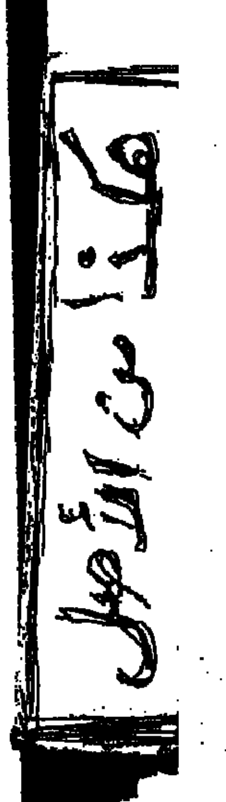
Pedestrian subways can be hazardous places. There is one in particular in Karlsruhe with a kiosk where drunks gather to drink beer and schnapps and occasionally fight. An emergency telephone has recently been installed.

Many people avoid the subway, a healthy reaction, says Burkhart.

He warned that it was not wise to regard the subway as safe merely because crime was not committed there.

Stefanie Mihm

(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 4 July 1986)



■ HORIZONS

Classroom distractions hold message for the teacher



Some educationists say that if pupils begin passing notes around and distracting themselves in other ways, they are fulfilling an emotional need.

Pupils are also sending a message to the teacher that something is lacking.

Rolf S., a tenth-class pupil at a *Gymnasium*, says: "If school really bores you stiff, if you think you cannot remember anything anymore, you have to do something about it."

A secondary schoolboy, Andi R., in the ninth class, described vividly what this meant in practice: "There is a rustle of newspapers in one corner. Jokes go the rounds. Crossword puzzles are tack*led with* the help of the chap in front or the one at the side of you. Books and exercise books are plastered with graffiti. People catch up with homework they *have* neglected. There is a lot of pushing and shoving, whispering and playing about. Notes are passed from one side of the classroom to another."

Everyone gets rid of his frustration, causes trouble, the young boys more so than the girls.

In defence of his classmates Rolf said: "There are a couple of super girls in our class who really liven things up in bleak periods. They get the most notes from the other lads."

"Yes, we write notes, when it is too dreary for words in a lesson. That's really fun," said Kirstin, one of the "super girls" in Rolf's class.

She said that "apart from highly personal notes other kinds did the rounds. That's one way to win support for a campaign against an unpopular teacher."

She continued: "We have all been fed up with our biology teacher for ages. He can only keep the class in check by threatening to write notes to our parents about bad behaviour."

She continued: "One day Rolf had an idea of how to get our own back on him. It was a round-robin — ignore questions in class for 45 minutes."

She said that even the best in the class did not dare put his hand up to answer a question, "although usually swots do not take part in private class decisions of this sort."

There's no lack of subjects for the more or less confidential classroom correspondence. Schoolboy Andreas said laughing: "There's plenty of explosive things to write about, and when there is nothing to say about our classmates then we write about the ladies and gentlemen of the teaching staff."

They certainly have something to say about their teachers, it seems.

This is how one note read: "Hello, Yvonne, What do you think of Schulze today? How she was made up! A course in cosmetics would not do her any harm. You look terrific. Best wishes to Nicole."

Or: "Look at our Scots lady. How neat she is today! She has really done herself up for us. I'm bored to death. It makes me feel really aggressive. Ciao, Jens." Most teachers usually do not react aggressively to the compliments concealed in the remarks made by pupils. If they feel things have gone too far they put on a show of being angry.

Most of them don't take much notice or just ignore the criticisms.

If the schoolboys and girls get too near the knuckle then they grin and bear it. Taking things to heart gets nowhere.

If a teacher gets hold of a note all round the class there are calls, "Read it out, read it out."

There is nothing else to do but read it out. Most of the notes are "fun" or "a load of rubbish," but a whole range of school problems are aired in them sometimes.

Claudia wonders why Klaus goes with Nicole, when Nicole has had a crush on Jens for ages.

Few notes deal with knitting or cooking recipe problems. They can, in fact, get serious; for instance, when a schoolgirl writes about the negative effects of the Pill.

Some notes describe how to kiss, the latest title from a pop group or "why Sylvester Stallone is attractive to the girls."

One tiny note was an invitation to a party, another a reminder of the promise of a kiss or a ramble on about Italian pasta. Some curse the job the writer had to do after school or quite simply moaned about the boredom of school itself.

Apart from writing confidential notes there are many other, more practical ways of turning boring lessons into fun.

Schoolboys and girls who fight shy of writing notes can "make up to their idols," or make gestures to put a meaning across, or with nudges and digs, by squabbling and horsing around.

According to school tests an effective antidote to classroom frustration is getting on the nerves of the person in the desk in front. What does this mean? "You tap on the leg of his chair, in time of course, until he freaks out completely."

The teachers cannot freak out. Asked how best to deal with classroom chaos that results from these "informal contacts," the academic term for classroom note-passing, a senior teacher said that it depends mainly on the teacher's personality and the degree of respect given him or her by the class.

Of course, the contents of the lessons are of prime importance as well. "A teacher must be like TV showmaster who can't bore his public for a second to be able to keep a class interested for three-quarters of an hour." The pupils feel themselves to be like the show-master's public, being taught passively, particularly when doing revision and even straight instruction.

Boredom in school can only be avoided if teachers learn "new tricks," new ways of presenting the material they have to teach.

A younger teacher is of the view that informal, forbidden note-passing between pupils is a way of letting off steam and compensating for rivalry and the pressures of learning.

Note-passing meets an emotional urge. At school there are too few opportunities to do this.

So it would be wrong to stop them if they want to communicate with their friends, and tell them that they can do so during the school breaks, on the way to school or at home.

Lessons should be organised to accommodate the practice of note-passing whilst still teaching the class the subjects in the syllabus.

Rolf S. confirmed this saying: "Our new geography teacher makes small jokes. You have to listen carefully or you might miss one of them. No one thinks about writing notes or anything like that."

The president of the Bavarian teachers association, Albin Dannhäuser, said: "All this shows that pupils have a need for something that lessons are not meeting. These notes passed round the class allow the teacher to attune his or her teaching to the mood of the class, although, of course, not everything can be included, because ultimately the school report at the end of the school year is what counts."

Dannhäuser regards the "informal contacts" as a sign that something constructive must be done about the teaching. Teachers cannot go ahead with school syllabuses that do not take into account the pupils' own needs.

The exchange of notes under the school desk and behind the teacher's back interrupts the class but this could be used in the teaching process, particularly when school is regarded as a dismal and dreary place.

Barbara Rüther

(Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, Hamburg, 13 July 1986)

The knots and bolts of a riverboat life

WESTDEUTSCHE ALLGEMEINE

Sixty-two young men are being trained as seamen for inland shipping on a training ship anchored at Duisburg-Homberg, named *Schulschiff Rhein*.

Like all young people lads who want a career in the barges and motorships of Europe's inland waterways have to attend a trade school.

As far back as 1935 the inland shipping employers' association provided the vessel to house ships' boys under training.

In the training ship they are taught everything they will need to know when they get a crew job on a ship.

In the ship's carpenter's shop they learn how to prepare a new plank for a rotten one in the dinghy.

They learn what to do if the engine goes wrong. Ship's captain Peter Haas said that a lot of improvisation was called for.

The difference between the training ship and the vessel the young men will eventually work on is that it is permanently at anchor.

In the morning the young seafarers have to go ashore to the training school. Three times, for periods of ten weeks a time, the ships' boys are given instruction in theory in the school.

So that they could have satisfactory accommodation during this period the employers' association made the moored vessel available.

Peter Haas has been in charge for the past 19 years. He said: "I now belong to the ship's inventory."

When a new ship was put into service in 1984 he said: "They built it around me."

He is assisted in the practical training by three young men who each have a captain's ticket.

One of the young seamen said: "What we do here we have to be able to do in the final examination. It's not all useless stuff but essential work."

This includes scrubbing the deck, of course. Another trainee said: "We have to do this otherwise the dirt is trodden inboard."

The youngsters do their work well. The carpets in all the corridors are spotless. It's more like being on a luxury steamer than in a hostel for 17 to 22-year-olds.

Sometimes there are important guests who get an insight into what goes on behind closed doors.

The employers' association has a small but elegant conference room on board. Other training rooms are used for adult courses in radio, radar and the transportation of dangerous cargoes.

The ships' boys do not need to worry about their future. Peter Haas said: "One day they will be ships' captains."

If there are only two people on an inland waterways vessel only one of them is a seaman.

Old salts who have seen how the young men do their ship's knots were very impressed.

Johanna Reinhold

(Westdeutsche Allgemeine, Essen, 18 June 1986)

Schulschiff RHEIN

Learning to be the captain. (Photo: Uwe Ernst)